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INTERPOL



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INTERPOL

BY

A. J. Forrest



LONDON
ALLAN WINGATE

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CONTENTS

<i>Author's Note</i>	<i>page</i> ix
CHAPTER	
1. CRIME'S GROWING INTERNATIONALISM	13
2. FOUNDATIONS AND PROGRESS	24
3. THE FINGERS OF SEARCH	37
4. DECEIVERS GALORE	56
5. THE FIGHT AGAINST COUNTERFEITERS	69
6. DRUG TRAFFICKERS NEGLECT NO EVIL	79
7. INTERPOL, GREAT BRITAIN, IN ACTION	93
8. THE FUGITIVE ALIEN	111
9. NO REVEILLE FOR RONALD CHESNEY	126
10. ARTISTIC VENGEANCE	137
11. AN INTERNATIONAL MURDERER	150
12. THE SWINDLER FROM THE GRAVE	165
13. WINGS OVER CRIME	174
14. FUGITIVES AT SEA	185
15. THE FEMININE HAND IN CRIME	192
16. THE SCIENTIST INTERPOLATES	205

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Scientific filing reduces search time to a minimum	<i>frontispiece</i>
	<i>facing page</i>
Secretary General, Monsieur Marcel Sicot	14
British Representative, Sir Ronald M. Howe, C.V.O., M.C.	14
President of the International Criminal Police Commission, Monsieur F. E. Louwage, O.B.E.	14
Card Indexes record all known aliases	15
Examining the criminal habits index	15
The radio message that initiates international inquiries	15
One more malefactor joins the files	15
Part of twenty million counterfeit dollars seized by the Sûreté Nationale in a Paris raid	64
Every counterfeit haul is registered and classified	64
The teen-ager's hideous experiment; this girl gives herself a 'joy pop' by lightly puncturing her thigh; later, when this kind of addiction fails to satisfy, she may fall for 'main liners', injections direct into an artery	65
The Trafficker boosts his profits from heroin by adding either white crystal iodine, amidol or milk sugar	65
Reefers, marihuana packed cigarettes, distributed through the subterfuge of a false book	80
Customs Officers conduct a spot check on the quayside; they search as carefully for black market gold as for undeclared drugs, nylons, jewels, perfumes or banknotes	80
The primitive coffin containing the 'body' of an international life assurance swindler after exhumation in a Ru- manian cemetery	81
The sack, used as substitute-corpse by the criminal, was filled with black soil	81
'A Boy Smoking', attributed to Franz Hals until exposed as counterfeit	144
'Head of Christ', Vermeer style, but proved by analysis to be of modern origin	144
'Jesus among the Doctors' painted as a test picture in Vermeer style by H. van Meegeren under supervision of the Dutch authorities	144
Inside a Turkish opium factory; the raw material brought in by farmers is ground and mixed, afterwards pour- ing out through the sieves as processed opium	145

	<i>facing page</i>
Contraband that failed to spread its poison: this package of Malayan cropped opium was intercepted on arrival in Japan and traced back to Singapore from where it was shipped with a consignment of medical supplies	145
An opium smoker's improvised outfit: this addict used a pipe made of rubber tubing connected to a small vase, his lamp being a combination of salt shaker and tumbler	160
The more orthodox smoking outfit: the opium set comprises a pipe, lamp, small can, head rest, and scissors and needles to roll the pills	160
The soap-making murderess of Correggio, Northern Italy	161
The kitchen range in Leonarda Cianciulli's apartment with the cauldron in which she boiled her soap-making ingredients	161

AUTHOR'S NOTE

MORE pleasurable than I expected has been the preparation and writing of this study of the International Criminal Police Commission. If the theme hurled one sharply at times against the thorns of human misery, mischief-making on a grand scale and downright evil, several compensations must be acknowledged. The task took me many hundreds of miles, from Preston in Lancashire to Paris, through France, Switzerland, Western Germany, Belgium and Holland. And, at every call and turn, I met with remarkable courtesy, understanding and helpfulness from judicial and police authorities alike. Interpol can be proud of its international brotherhood, a kind of free-masonry of the law.

My gratitude is due to many; many, who cannot be mentioned, but I am especially indebted to Monsieur F. E. Louwage, O.B.E. Hon. Inspector General of the Belgian Ministry of Justice, and President of the I.C.P.C. since 1946, and to Monsieur Marcel Sicot, Inspector General of Training of the Sûreté Nationale, and Secretary General of I.C.P.C. since 1951 for the generous facilities he afforded me to study Interpol's work at its Paris headquarters. Of his staff, all were helpful, and especially Commissaire Jean Jacques Marc, and Monsieur Lucien Aubé, each chief of headquarter sections.

Others, without whose assistance, or word in season this book could not have been written are Sir Ronald Howe, C.V.O., M.C., Deputy Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis of London, and British Representative of Interpol, Professor Werner Lüthi, Procureur Général of the Swiss Confederation, and Switzerland's Interpol Representative, Monsieur de Foy, Directeur Général of the Sûreté Publique, Belgium, Monsieur F. Franssen, Commissaire Général to Judicial Delegations, Brussels, and Interpol Representative, Belgium, Monsieur J. Van Ijsendoron, Head of the Criminal Department, Police Division, Ministry of Justice,

Holland, and Dr. Giuseppe Dosi, Questeur, and Head of I.C.P.C.'s Central National Bureau, Italy.

To Colonel T. E. St Johnston, C.B.E., Chief Constable of Lancashire, I am indebted for generous facilities to gather and use material presented in Chapter 8 (The Fugitive Alien). Dr. Paul Coremans Director of the Central Laboratory of Belgium Museums, courteously permitted me to quote an observation made to him by van Meegeren in Chapter 10 (Artistic Vengeance). I owe, also, Dr. W. Froentjes, Head of the Legal and Scientific Research Laboratory, the Dutch Ministry of Justice, a 'thank you' for some scientific facts incorporated in this chapter. And Dr. Keith Simpson, Reader in Forensic Medicine, Guy's Hospital, happily allowed me to refer to dental evidence used in a murder case to which I have drawn attention in my final chapter.

Of external organisations, helpful to me, the United Nations Narcotics Commission merits first credit. Active in gathering information about the evil of drug trafficking, and promoting campaigns to suppress it, the Commission's efforts in this field deserve, I feel, the support and goodwill of conscientious and enlightened citizens everywhere. Mr. Harry J. Anslinger, U.S. Narcotics Commissioner, Bureau of Narcotics, the Treasury Department, Washington, also assisted my researches, besides making valuable comments on my original manuscript for Chapter 6 (Drug Traffickers Neglect No Evil).

None of these authorities, however, except where specifically quoted, must be held responsible for any fact or opinion expressed throughout my book. Upon my head be the responsibility, but not, I trust, the crime of writing with candour of such investigations as I carried out into Interpol's activities. And, whatever the results of my findings, I commend those services, world wide in scope and influence to-day. Accepted now by more than fifty countries and territories of independent sovereignty, Interpol serves each one, individually, as a stout bulwark, respectful of law, national no less than international in context, and through the devoted services and skills of specialist police officers, multi lingual or merely of one language, much international criminality is curbed, confined and confounded.

A. J. FORREST

Brandon, Suffolk, *January* 1955

LIST OF MEMBER STATES OF THE INTERNATIONAL
CRIMINAL POLICE COMMISSION

Argentina - Australia - Austria - Belgium - Brazil - Burma -
Canada - Ceylon - Chile - Colombia - Costa Rica - Cuba -
Denmark - Dominican Republic - Egypt - Eire - Finland -
France - Germany - Great Britain - Greece - Guatemala - India
- Indonesia - Iran - Israel - Italy - Japan - Lebanon - Libya -
Luxembourg - Mexico - Monaco - Netherlands - New Zealand
- Northern Ireland - Norway - Pakistan - Philippines - Portu-
gal - Sarr - Singapore - Spain - Sweden - Switzerland - Syria -
Tangier - Thailand - Turkey - U.S.A. - Venezuela - Yugoslavia.

CHAPTER ONE

CRIME'S GROWING INTERNATIONALISM

CRIME acknowledges no frontiers. As the world gains in compactness, because of the remarkable distance annihilating powers of contemporary transport, crime, inevitably, creates a new internationalism. Each year sees more international criminals pursuing either individually, in groups or in gangs their own specialised lines of mischief. This does not mean the world is embracing fresh wickedness. On the contrary, most of the European nations which experienced so sharp and violent a crime wave after the last war capitulations of Germany and Japan, have since 1951 watched and welcomed a steady decline in the number of criminal offences recorded within their national frontiers.

Crime's growing internationalism is fundamentally the outcome of man's soaring travel mindedness. Partially to circumvent this mobility, Britain is blessed, as few large nations, by her guardian moat; if ever birdmen learn to fly over the Channel or frogmen prove capable of floundering across beneath its waves, police officers in the British Isles will face international crime problems which are quite foreign to them to-day.

Belgium's situation typifies that of countries whose national frontiers are predominantly land locked. A criminal can steal a car in the Grand Place, Brussels, say at midday. Within two to three hours, he can put himself, merely by the exertion of driving it, outside Belgium's jurisdiction entirely. He can be speeding with equal facility to some pre-arranged destination inside France, Western Germany, Holland or the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. In fact, by the time the car owner discovers his loss, the thief may

have sold his prize to a Frenchman, German, Dutchman or Luxembourger.

Modern air transport, of course, endows international criminals with a far more conspicuous and dangerous mobility. The world's regular air services, quite apart from taxi services or private aircraft, serve now a sizeable muster of wealthy and resourceful diamond smugglers, black marketeers in gold, dope pedlars, confidence tricksters, false cheque utterers, substitution thieves and swindlers of all sorts as an almost magical vehicle with which to effect lightning coups carried out in all corners of the world, and to accompany these coups by equally rapid vanishing acts.

The gangster wanted for murder in, say, New York, may be speeding halfway across the Atlantic—or he may be already flying over Central Africa—before the American police even discover the evidence of his thuggery. Yet, while criminals use aircraft to forestal pursuit, they travel much more frequently by air in order to bring off sensational coups at sites far distant from both their normal hunting grounds and playgrounds.

As changes are chronicled in the movement of peoples, arising either from controlled emigration or the issue of work permits to foreign labourers, so a nation's police officers may meet varieties of crime not hitherto encountered inside their territories. In her coal-fields, sited chiefly in her intensively active industrial province of Le Hainault, Belgium now finds employment for approximately 60,000 foreign born miners, the majority of whom are Italians, but a number hail from Algeria. These workers, traditionally, are much addicted to smoking marihuana or cannabis. And until their arrival, this type of narcotic addiction had no foothold at all inside Belgium.

The ugly habit, too, counts new addicts in Western Germany where, in the southern, formerly the U.S. Zone, garrisons of American negroes have created cells of marihuana addiction. Such cells do not restrict their membership to coloured servicemen. For, puffing their own way to some false heaven of exorbitant sensations, hardened and callous-minded addicts—the qualities are synonymous—soon entice their girl friends to try a smoke. So, immediately a drug-taking ring is formed, the circles of it, unless quickly suppressed, ripple outwards, ever widening their powers of evil to drag in fresh addicts—addicts, often quite



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Card Indexes record all known aliases



Examining the criminal habits index



The radio message that initiates international inquiries



Photos by courtesy I.C.P.C.
One more malefactor joins the files

alien in race, language, upbringing and education to their initiators.

Nations can reply effectively to such tendencies by observing one safe principle. They must reject any parochial attitude begotten of prejudice, ignorance or sheer national obstinacy in their approach to international criminal problems. Clear-sightedness, here, is as essential as co-operation. For wrong-doers to-day at international levels, men and women, whose crime affects more than one country or who commit crimes in countries outside their homelands, are greatly encouraged whenever they discover a nation whose police forces are slack, in the least corruptible or tolerant of antiquated detection and crime preventative measures.

Faced as we are, with an ever dwindling universe in relation to man's power to shift himself from A to Z, we are faced, as if in punishment for progress, with the increasingly prolific activities of dangerous criminal organisations, moving freely, in all countries, where people are politically free to travel. A few Central European 'internationals' sneak at times behind the Iron Curtain, or issue forth from its rigid shelter, but wherever possible, such criminals cherish the freedom of the West, not only for the better opportunities it provides for their form of livelihood, but also because of their much less exacting punishments by law when caught.

To-day, particularly among countries accustomed to deal extensively in international currencies, the uttering of false cheques has become as troublesome an offence as the uttering of counterfeit money. But trafficking in false notes, in common with illicit drug trafficking, merit more special consideration as international offences. For the menace promoted by their commission frequently strikes harder at nations, beyond the borders of those, where criminal gangs hatch their counterfeit plots or process their supplies of raw opium, so converting it into diluted compounds and adding enormously to their profits.

The United States, for example, serves as the world's foremost target for illicit drug traffickers. The reports and findings of U.N.'s Narcotics Commission emphasise this truth repeatedly. In fact, as a number of prominent U.S. Narcotics Law Enforcement Officers avow, 'enemy agents' from 'Red China' are responsible for financing and organising colossal drug conspiracies, the object of which is to undermine the very tap-roots of American democracy. Here, political considerations refute any argument that

such activities may be merely proliferated by self-interested gangs of international crooks. In the background loom red mandarins, and high ranking Chinese officials, some of whom, cited by name, are accused of shipping heroin and morphine by every conceivable ruse to the American seaboard, whereupon with ingenuity, just as subtle, the insidious stuff is distributed by agents inside the country on a scale sufficiently vast to demoralise entire cities.

Heavy consignments are seized periodically. Some parcels of opium, moreover, retrieved from 'red' agents by U.S. police and customs authorities originate from the opium caravans, whose picturesque passage across the wastelands of the Yunnan Province in China is more than matched by the deadliness of their wares. Several hundred men may march in one such column; ten or more tons of opium may travel with it; and if one analysed the feelings of these hirelings, servants of allegedly shrewdly conducted political secret societies, it would be to discover a contemptuous 'white trash' look behind their Oriental masks. Forbidden, on pain of losing their ears to sample their own merchandise, the more enlightened know very well, according to American evidence, for what purpose it is being carried to shipping bases.

Necessity forces the United States to remain alert and super-sensitive to illicit drug importations. And, well directed preventative efforts are further handicapped, because the bulk of drugs, thus smuggled into the country, arrive in a form already suitable for 'feeding' to addicts and anyone else tempted by sudden folly or hysterical day dreams. The clandestine drug factory or dilution plant, where corrupt chemists weigh out their refinements, exists often thousands of miles away from regions where drugs, so brewed, spread their contamination.

Europe's record is a black one. Several illicit factories, so damaging to U.S. welfare, have been discovered in France, Italy and Turkey. Sometimes, in France, the dilution plant may be traced to a chateau, even one noted for its tourist appeal. Corruption can wear a charming face, but in other cases, the traffickers prefer the greater seclusion offered by an isolated villa, a lonely farmhouse, or some garage well concealed in private grounds. In Italy, organisations, more dangerous in calibre, have masqueraded as legitimate drug manufacturing firms, secured licences from the

State, and then, under the guise of doing legitimate business, shipped quantities of drugs, ostensibly for the relief of pain in hospitals, but in bitter truth to supply a huge 'black market' ring, trading in 'joy pops' under the cloak of respectability and humanitarian relief work.

An unhappily big proportion of the raw drug material, which filters illegally into the European market, must acknowledge Lebanon as its source of origin. In this country, local authorities are not as anti-drug conscious as many other nations have reason to desire. So, in default of a stringent control of opium production, a vicious, ocean-ranging circle of illicit drug traffic gains momentum.

The raw opium, smuggled from its fields of harvest, travels first via ship to Mediterranean ports where agents of the organising gang carry it direct to secret refineries on the mainland. Then, made up into morphine or heroin, the wretched stuff is spirited by ship or plane across the Atlantic, and planted by pedlars in cities and zones where the craving for its evil excitements is unsatisfied.

The trafficker in false money does not invite his clients to savour the ugliness of premature death. But he, too, wields a weapon, the weight of which, by its very character, has internationally disruptive powers. As a rule, the well-financed, well equipped and daring criminal 'rings', specialising in counterfeiting popular currencies, do not restrict their productions to any one country or currency. They are just as likely to run off on their illicit presses Ethiopian dollars, Italian lire as well as Belgium, Swiss and French franc notes, although, of the 2,500 counterfeiting cases, registered since the Second World War, more than 400 related to U.S. dollar counterfeits. And this currency, with its unrivalled purchasing power, ranks, of course, as the counterfeiting ring's prime favourite.

Western Germany's Deutschemark attracts falsifiers, too, both in and outside the Federal Government's territory. Prosperity, inevitably, has its hangers-on, counterfeiters among them. And, as the German people extend their resources, working, as they have worked since the War, to the world's admiration, with fanatical zeal to rebuild their shattered, demilitarised and often stupidly dismantled industries, so the purchasing power of their

currency must grow, and with it, new attempts to exploit spurious examples.

Illicit printing shops, hidden in France or Belgium, may turn out 200,000 twenty Deutschemark notes in a single day's operation. The gang's distributors, resorting to smuggling tactics, then filter these wares into the black money markets in main cities like Hamburg, Frankfort, Munich and Cologne.

This development is a satirical reversal of Hitler's plot, so ably assisted by the Russian, Smolianoff, to turn out millions of pounds worth of fraudulent £5 and £10 Bank of England notes to embarrass the British economy. On a scale nowhere paralleled in the annals of forgery, Himmler established his forger's plant in Sachsenhausen-Orienburg concentration camp, staffing it with professional printers, lithographers and engravers with the Russian's unrivalled skills, as an artist forger of £5 notes, setting the standard for all. The threat of liquidation demanded the best from each craftsman. Slackers and bunglers cut no blocks here. Hence the enterprise, conceived with devilish cunning, and very ably organised, disgorged with a professional flair a gargantuan total in money's worth of counterfeit Bank of England notes. Through this achievement, Hitler supposed himself master of yet another secret weapon to break the obstinate English neck.

Several of these illicit products, beautifully fashioned, are still 'in circulation'. Herr B. Wüthrich, Secretary of the Swiss Federal Government's Office for the suppression of Counterfeit Money at Berne, has a collection of forged £100 Bank of England notes, all presented, since the war, in his country. And hardly a month passes without some clever utterer persuading a guileless tourist to give him change for a dud note of high value.

Adherents of the Hitler plan, but mercifully not nearly so ambitious, lurk still inside Germany. Some younger apprentices have joined the ex-concentration camp pastmasters. And, members of this fraternity find it remunerative still to counterfeit Bank of England notes, not always with the British market in view. There is one instance of a criminal organisation, operating in Central Africa, which schemed to inundate British Colonial possessions with fraudulent pound notes, but first, as the gang's negotiations revealed, a shady firm of printers in Western Germany was coaxed to deliver the forged bundles.

Immense distances sometimes separate the counterfeiter from the utterer. Counterfeit £1 notes, printed in Marseilles, one of the world's most lucrative false money centres as well as illicit drug distribution ports, may be passed over counters as far remote as Toronto or Melbourne. It becomes, therefore, of paramount importance for each country to set aside littleness, narrow self interest and national prejudices in order to detect and foil the plots and stratagems of international criminals.

New Scotland Yard, contrary to the views of most writers of detective fiction, is not asked to give its expert assistance as an active investigator very often, perhaps less than six times in a year, by the county and borough police forces in Britain. But the mere fact of its presence, the huge accumulation of police knowledge and efficiency, not to mention the laboratory resources it commands, act as a steadying effect, a reserve of power, stimulating to the local C.I.D. whenever an investigation is afoot. And no police force in Britain could function efficiently without the Yard's records, its Criminal Record Office Files, and General Registry, at its immediate call.

Similarly, but with a much wider range, it is essential that, in the international field, there should be a well trusted, co-ordinating, anti-crime force, completely independent of national sovereignty, but pledged to serve all its member states as information centre, and international criminal record office, with powers to transmit vital search and verification requests from one country to all countries, if necessary, in order to run wanted men to ground. There is no necessity to maintain an international field force. Perish the idea. Full confidence must be reposed in member organisations so that the parent body can, in effect, alert, as need arises, the services of all police forces whose governments contribute to its maintenance. Hence, with a very small staff, such a body can spread its network over an immense field, concentrating, but never directing, the efforts of varying national police forces to arrest a malefactor or solve an international crime problem.

That, fundamentally, represents the role, assumed to-day by the International Criminal Police Commission, known for brevity's sake as Interpol. Stated more succinctly, however, the active co-operation, upon which its usefulness depends, subscribes to the following principles:

The International Bureau, established in Paris, corresponds only with the chiefs of the National Central Bureaux, set up by each of the Commission's member states. Each National Central Bureau (N.C.B.) acts as a clearing office on all questions of international crime; to do this efficiently, it must be able to draw on the resources of a central organisation, maintained within its own country, which has at hand all national and international documentation concerning criminals. The N.C.B. thus becomes the correspondence link, furnishing information, identification and criminal record data, as well as requesting researches or inquiries, in answer to requests addressed to it from other N.C.B.'s or from the International Bureau. Thus, Interpol deals only with one authority in each country, an expedient which saves time and also expense.

Interpol as a body, and especially the International Bureau (I.B.) in Paris avoids the pitfall of running an active investigation service. All inquiries and researches are executed on request of the I.B. and N.C.B.'s by national police forces, so that, in every investigation, national sovereignty is fully safeguarded, and member states do not tread on each other's toes. Only the documentation at the International Bureau may be considered supra-national. For, all criminal police forces, throughout the world, may avail themselves of what is there recorded, but this service, highly valuable as it is, is completely divorced from executive powers.

Whether Interpol yet obtains the full co-operation and trust it deserves from all member states is an arguable point. By its very constitution, however, and the mixed pattern of the nations, subscribing to its aims, it must proceed tactfully and discreetly. Inquiries launched from the I.B. in Paris may terminate with an arrest, far outside European land frontiers, perhaps in a country or island alien to European conceptions of justice.

Directly a National Central Bureau asks the International Bureau to search for a particular criminal, an international circulation is made out for him, sometimes with details added from the dossiers kept in Paris, and this circulation is transmitted over Interpol's world-wide network, unless the wanted man's hiding place is known to be confined to a definite area or Continent. If the fugitive's offence is a serious one, the chances are that his circulation will bear a red corner tab, so symbolising an immediate

arrest order. Then whatever police force picks up the criminal knows that his extradition, following his arrest, will be requested. And, in all such cases, diplomatic procedures, sometimes to the embarrassment, not to say chagrin of policemen, must be most strictly observed.

Interpol's function as an informative and preventative agency is not less valuable. Suppose an habitual criminal, a white slave trafficker, counterfeiting gang's boss or confidence trickster, disappears suddenly from haunts he ordinarily patronises. The local police, with their ears glued very close to underground movements, then hear through an informer or agent that their man has sneaked across the frontier into Italy or Spain; perhaps, if he is singularly incautious, he may have crossed the Channel to London. Interpol is promptly informed. The 'news' is then, through its own mediums, circulated.

Hence, as sometimes happens, even before the visitor reaches his new hunting ground, the police of the country selected for his visit are forewarned. He is then, if regarded as a dangerous character, 'housed', i.e. watched without being aware of it. So, if he attempts any of his old tricks, a vigilant officer will probably arrest him immediately.

Interpol, most wisely, refuses to be side-tracked or misused by preoccupation with crimes of a political, religious or racial significance. Were it so concerned, the Commission could not fail to infringe, innocently or otherwise, the independent sovereignty of its member states, over fifty strong to-day.

At some future 'golden age', no doubt, political crimes will be dealt with on a world scale, but before such an accomplishment, a world system of justice must prevail, with every national government, east or west of our current world's most formidable barrier, the Iron Curtain, subservient to its authority. As international criminal matters now stand, even many of the so called free nations differ markedly in their attitudes to transgressors of *le droit commun*, so Interpol must face, on occasion, conflicting practices.

There are countries, for example, where the bigamist can find refuge. In Sweden to-day, abortion, a serious crime in many countries, is no crime at all so long as it is conducted with medical sanction and proper medical safeguards. Accordingly the abor-

tionist, fleeing to Sweden, may discover there sanctuary from the laws of his own country, laws which expose him to most severe punishment if his guilt is established. And other nations, besides Lebanon, fail to exercise as strict a control as mankind's welfare demands over their opium growers. Crime, therefore, which is well controlled in one spot may be kept alive, like some bitter, parasitic plant which merely springs up afresh when cut, solely through a far away nation's carelessness or indifference or wretchedly partisan financial interests.

The world's regular air services can, too, be highly irregular in their interpretation of criminal actions committed in aircraft. In fact, there is no common procedure laid down and accepted even by Interpol's member states for the arrest, detention and trial of criminals whose *délits* or criminal acts occur while a plane is actually in transit.

This problem, concisely presented by Interpol's President, Monsieur F. E. Louwage, at the Commission's 1954 Annual General Assembly, held in Rome, was debated by delegates from several countries with a praiseworthy sense of urgency. But, although the need for uniformity was recognised, nations cannot be rushed into formulating new legislature, nor to agree, even in principle, that a common legal code, equivalent to an international law, should be adopted to standardise procedures in dealing with all types of criminal offences committed in moving aircraft.

Meantime, embarrassments, favourable to mischief makers, must be endured. Suppose—to take a hypothetical case—a Canadian air liner leaves Montreal for Europe and after passing over Canadian territorial waters, a Swedish passenger drives a knife into the back of an Egyptian citizen, travelling in front of him. The aircraft's captain makes his first landing in Scotland. He reports the offence, and hands over the culprit to the local police. Perhaps, if his flight schedule allows him sufficient breathing space, he has just time enough to prepare a rough summary of evidence. Then, he must fly on to his next stop. The Scottish police, left with a suspected murderer on their hands, are then in a quandary. What action should they take? Which of the authorities interested in the Swede's offence is most competent to try him—the country of his origin, of the plane's origin, of the victim's origin, or that country into whose custody he is first

delivered? Unless the Scottish law officers are competent in this case, they must know quickly to whom to apply for an extradition order. Such problems, in view of the short time it is possible to detain the prisoner, without the competent judicial authority preferring a charge against him, must be settled quickly.

Interpol's efficacy as a world force in countering crime, international in tinge, rests pre-eminently upon the readiness of member states to pool their resources, and use their different skills to co-operate together for the advantage of each member state, indeed to the great advantage of humanity as a whole. And, just as they place their trust in a well-directed, and carefully organised international research and informative agency, so they must not stand aloof from complicated issues which, as yet unsolved, offer loopholes to the international criminal. In exploiting them he is already a pastmaster.

So far from friendly police co-operation at all levels producing an inflexible world police force, the sort of monstrous, suppressive organisation which only totalitarian states scheme to achieve, this flexibility in relationship between the C.I.D.'s of over fifty nations must give a new impetus to international goodwill. A by-product so engendered is, undoubtedly, the promotion of common standards of good citizenship. For, when one nation can trust another to catch its runaway criminals, or exchange with it freely all useful information on criminal affairs, then surely it is not presumptuous to forecast a twofold gain; firstly an increasingly difficult time for international criminals and mischief-makers and secondly, what is just as desirable, the advance of a spirit of progressive confidence between peoples widely separated by languages and tradition?

Since crime disregards all frontiers to-day, the conquest of it must be equally barrier-free. And, apart from skilled police intervention, that conquest, if crime prevention as opposed to detection be construed as the true goal of police services, can best be secured by the adoption of sound living standards, based upon good housing, good education, good welfare services and rewarding employment, and, as the essential corollary to such slumless Utopias, communities, so cradled, must observe sound ethical practices. In brief, international co-operation in suppressing crime may claim as its handmaiden or invisible asset, international good citizenship.

CHAPTER TWO

FOUNDATIONS AND PROGRESS

THE International Criminal Police Commission represents the creation of many minds diverse in their country of origin. For some pioneering police officers still happily alive, it marks also the fulfilment of a long cherished but, at times, elusive vision. Yet, while many deserve credit for its inception and growth, one individual above all must be singled out for his exceptional devotion to its development, and outstanding distinction as the Commission's President.

Monsieur F. E. Louwage, O.B.E., ranks not simply as Belgium's veteran police officer. Placed on his country's retired list, after attaining the age of sixty-five, he was awarded the title of Honorary Inspector General of the Belgian Ministry of Justice. But, noteworthy as his services to his country, they are eclipsed by his international services. Elected President of the reconstituted Commission in June 1946, he retains that honour to-day and is now working out his second five year term of office. When finally he steps down, Interpol will lose not only an eminent police executive, but a first class diplomat. Handling international police conferences needs such qualities in a President as firmness, tact, studied knowledge of every subject under discussion, controlled by a quietly disciplined and forceful yet essentially co-operative personality able to see his way clearly through all entanglements set up by differences of race, national interest and languages. It will be hard, indeed, to find a successor of like calibre. Pre-war, too, he was a significant figure in the Commission's councils.

Few police officers in Europe or anywhere in the world underwent a more rigorous training or acquired in the course of it higher

qualifications as an international crime specialist. Born at Calloo, near Antwerp on January 2nd, 1888, Florent E. Louwage was educated, primarily, at a military school, but thoughts of a military career scarcely whetted his ardour. The son of a police official, he joined in 1909 the Ostend police force. His mettle was soon apparent. It earned him a transfer to the Brussels police force with the rank of Assistant Superintendent. His policeman's progress was halted, however, when the Kaiser's armies swarmed over Europe. Enlisting in the Belgian army, he served as an infantry officer until, in August 1915, he was posted to the Intelligence and Detective Branch of the Belgian Field Army. Action suited him. It gave him scope for his quick grasp of essentials and powers of improvisation, precious gifts in any policeman's make-up.

When, in 1918, his department accompanied the Army into Occupied Territory, with Aachen as its headquarters, he was in full command. Then, a few months later, the authorities brought him back to Brussels, appointing him as a Judicial Officer attached to the Belgian Public Prosecutor's Department. In this capacity, he soon proved a tower of strength to his senior, the Chief Judicial Officer, Monsieur Keffer, who had long acted as his country's chief spokesman at International Police Congresses. To cope with the surprisingly vicious post-war crime wave, from which no war-harried European country escaped, these two men largely reorganised the Belgian criminal police. They placed the entire administration on a much sounder footing, co-ordinated resources throughout the country, and equipped the force with the best available means of communications.

This undertaking brought Monsieur Louwage into close contact with European police problems. It gave him insight, not always refreshing, into peculiarities both in character and technique of criminals discovered inside his own country, and those drawn from neighbouring lands. Incisive in expression and shrewd in his grasp of criminal psychology, he has assembled this knowledge for the aid of less experienced policemen in his publications *Technique of Some Thefts and Swindles* (1932), *Criminal, Technical and Practical Police* (1944) and *Psychology and Criminality* (1945).

Meantime, in 1925 he was appointed Belgium's delegate at the International Criminal Police Congress held in New York and

three years later he succeeded M. Keffer as head of the criminal police organisation directed by the Public Prosecutor's Department in Brussels. At this period the *International Criminal Police Commission*, the Interpol of to-day, was five years old.

For news of its birth, we must revert to the first International Judicial Police Conference held at Monaco in April 1914. Under the Presidency of Professor Larnaude, Dean of the Paris Law School, barristers, solicitors, police officials and magistrates from 24 nations considered an agenda, the main subjects of which referred to the standardisation of extradition procedures, identification of criminals, creation of a central punishments record office and of a scientific institute to study new advances in police technique. Nearly 300 delegates attended. There was evidence of world-wide interest representatives from Brazil, Cuba, Guatemala and San Salvador as well as from Turkey and Persia.

The conference smoothly organised with the little principality's sovereign peace a stimulant to harmonious agreement heralded the emergence of a new concept in police affairs—the realisation that international criminals, favoured by the increasingly swift progress in transport, must be opposed by supra-national police action if their menace to nations, other than those of their own domicile or upbringing, was to be defeated. The conference firmly recognised this principle, so delegates left determined to foster a new spirit, through which well co-ordinated and concerted international police action could best serve the law-abiding interests of nations.

Beforehand periodic scandals, chiefly discoveries of large scale white slave trafficking, called for joint action from police forces of neighbouring nations or nations most affected by such ramifications. But no international machinery, other than the extradition treaties, framed by foreign offices, existed to secure the speedy arrest of suspects who, not without reason, reckoned to elude punishment by placing a national frontier or two between themselves and their home police forces. If one surveys the several international penal conferences held during the nineteenth century, in which the fugitive criminal problem was debated, the conclusion must be reached that international co-operation was slow in awakening in this field.

Evil-doers would have operated more lucratively had not

existing modes of travel retarded their movements. They had, also, the advantage of living in an era largely unimpeded by passport and visa formalities, an era, too, of massive and uncontrolled migrational movements. The criminal who found it paid him to cultivate an international outlook experienced little difficulty in sneaking through lightly manned frontiers whose guards might, perhaps in favourable circumstances, be on the watch for him.

A savage destiny stifled at birth the Monaco conference's good resolutions. For, before its constructive proposals could gain root, Europe was engulfed in her first World War and before the lamps of her mud-reddened continent, so fantastically and disastrously put out, glimmered afresh the very heart, it seemed, had been plucked from the most advanced and civilised of human races. But while the struggle endured, criminal activity was necessarily restrained. War zones were naturally accompanied by rigid frontier restrictions; civilian movements were as strictly controlled, so, within the territories of combatant countries, there was no fluid movement of 'internationals'. And, such is war's grip over the worst, as well as the best of mankind, several incorrigible 'bad hats' no doubt died gallantly fighting on this side or that.

The Armistice, as was to be expected, threw up a new malaise. For the bitter mood, which descended on Europe after so much blood letting, releasing floods of dejection and disillusion, tainted victor and vanquished alike. As its darkness surged, exploding hopes, and killing optimism and decency, so an atmosphere of moral laxity, boredom and irresponsibility besetting the grievously wounded and weakened nations led to hitherto unprecedented outbursts of criminal violence, accompanied by widespread contempt of the social order.

None too soon, therefore, the cornerstone of the present edifice was laid in 1923 when, through the initiative of Dr Hans Schober, Chief of the Viennese Police, the second International Judicial Police Conference was called. Conducted in the Austrian capital with the same items on the agenda as formerly, the Conference decided to found the International Criminal Police Commission, Vienna being its headquarters and with it an international bureau where a staff of specialists would keep records of international criminals and assist the police forces of member states to search

for, identity and arrest malefactors known or suspected of fleeing for refuge to territories beyond their national frontiers.

Dr. Schober was elected president. The Commission was further charged to publish a monthly bulletin to which experts in legal procedures, forensic law and criminology would contribute, to keep records of advances and discoveries in police technique, maintain a register of counterfeit money seizures, and note, catalogue and, whenever desirable, circulate details of new subterfuges or *modus operandi* adopted by those whose criminal activities were troublesome.

America, oddly, created almost at the same time an international police organisation, known as the International Police Conference, for the purpose of establishing a similar service, based on New York City, for the American Continent. But its sponsors, much to their disappointment, soon found it lacked incentives when contrasted with the European Commission. No one ought to be surprised about this. For America suffered no appreciable war upheaval and until gangsterdom got into its stride, her contact with crimes of violence, smuggling, fraud, forgery and similar hocus pocus lagged behind European levels. So, with no dynamism to uphold it, this organisation faded away. Whereupon various nations of the New World, Southern American republics among them, decided to work in future with the I.C.P.C.

By 1938 the Viennese International Bureau had woven, to its credit, a police intelligence network covering thirty-one member states. Originally, it functioned, nearly exclusively, as the core to a Central European system of police surveillance and arrest actions. But, by this year of crisis, with the Nazi power already baleful in aggrandisement, the organisation counted on good co-operation, with useful results of benefit to all, from criminal police departments far outside the European seaboard and land frontiers. Moreover, eastwards the horizon, if not bright was helpful. Russia never joined the Commission, but Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, Rumania, Czechoslovakia and the Baltic States were active members.

The League of Nations recognised the Commission's usefulness, and the value of its authority on international crime questions, by inviting frequently the attendance of its representatives before special Committees at Geneva. In this capacity, Monsieur Lou-

wage three times in succession acted as the Commission's spokesman in reply to questions relating to narcotics trafficking and white slavery. In 1936, Belgium's supreme police officer, as I must describe this sparely built, thin faced, commanding and agreeable man, was promoted to the office of Commissioner General to Judicial Delegations. This new post enabled him to concentrate even more closely on international criminal and penal problems. So his experience as a national police executive spans as no one else's does the entire stretch of Interpol's years. Once again the war clouds rumbled.

With the Anschluss a reality the future of I.C.P.C. was indeed wobblesome. Its records were transferred to Berlin. The Swastika obtruded ominously over a pitch which hitherto had been kept free of political interference. And, as Germany's aggressive demands grew more insurmountable, her war machine already geared to a new *furore teutonicus*, many people foresaw the collapse of yet another international instrument designed to create trust and promote good citizenship among nations. The worst befell. Their plate filled by the advent of the Second World War, the German authorities impounded all I.C.P.C.'s files, documents, minutes and records. Neighbouring states had little time now to think of common law criminals as totalitarian law, abetted by roaring panzer columns, crashing gun salvoes, screaming, bomb-aiming Stukas and darting Messerschmitts, screwed its grimly ordered authority into their legislations.

The second age of darkness, beneath which our twentieth century civilisation has reeled, released an even more virulent germ of lawlessness than the 1914-18 War. Under the stress of prolonged occupation, worsening as the war dragged on, harrassed and ingenious peoples perfected new techniques in black-marketing. Crime became almost second nature to many. Every ruse was adopted to burrow under the enemy's security regulations. Populations had to cheat to survive, and some successful individual cheaters discovered a rare zest in their secretly organised activities. So that when peace, or what masqueraded as peace arrived, many felt bereft of power, and gave way, ultimately, to such ills as discontent, moroseness, and a craving for underground action alone generate.

When V.E. Day brought about Germany's unconditional sur-

render, Europe herself was on her knees, a bomb-happy, debris-littered continent drained alike of energy, optimism and faith. To the victors fell unparalleled spoils. Their appropriations acquired a lopsided kind of honesty, since many allied troops excused their actions by reminding one another that the Nazis, pastmasters as looters, had to be paid back. Only scrupulously honest members of the victorious allies refrained from 'knocking off' personal treasures. Multitudes armed themselves with supplies of chocolate, soap, cigarettes, coffee, tea, razor-blades and other N.A.A.F.I. or P.X. desirables and entered with fun and relish into illegal barter; everything was to be had from wrist watches to grand pianos, from Leugers to Leicas, from Holbeins to Hohenzollern heirlooms. Fur coats could be obtained for sacks of potatoes and their owners often for appreciably less.

In this atmosphere of conquest and licentiousness is it any wonder that some servicemen and civilians in uniform indulged in large scale black marketing operations, especially as among the latter, to Great Britain's detriment, some very sorry and avaricious specimens paraded? Or, can it be wondered that refugee camps, hastily, but sometimes brilliantly improvised, had their cells of gangsters, killers and racketeers whose depredations and terrorising power over local populations were mastered only by military force?

Thus a new order of illegal-minded men and women emerged. Seduced by the ease with which profits could be amassed, the ease, too, by which the affections of German Frauleins were won, honestly or dishonestly, these traffickers with self interest as their god secured first-class cars, houses or apartments lavishly furnished according to the best standards of German *gemütlichkeit*, and all the drink they craved. The thought of ever settling down again to hard and relatively unrewarding work—I assume some of them did it once—must have appeared as a nightmare to many of these black marketing 'napoleons' when sober.

It must be recognised, too, that Commando operations endowed other men with uncommon boldness. The itch for dangerous adventures bit deep into their beings, and it was an itch founded on highly developed techniques in planning, preparation and execution. The man, for whom an assault action was better than beer or whisky, could hardly be expected to throw off, immedi-

ately, that craving in his blood by turning over to a straight life in Civvy Street. Crime might beckon him. Its rewards were higher, and punishment for failure, for bungling the job, far less severe than a bullet through the head. All in all the wonder is that Europe's post 1939-45 War crime wave—a wave felt by all countries from the German capitulation until recession set in in 1951—was not even fiercer.

During the War, Monsieur Louwage served his country as Inspector General de la Sûreté d'Etat. When it ended, he appreciated too keenly the turmoil thrown up by the aftermath to lose time in seeking to rebuild the International Criminal Police Commission. He sounded the views of some of his former international colleagues. Those consulted included Mr. (now Sir) Ronald Howe, now Deputy Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis of London, Dr. Harry Södermann, Head of Sweden's Criminological Institute, the late Werner Müller, Chief of the Swiss Government's Federal Police Bureau at Berne, and Monsieur Louis Ducloux, General Controller of the Sûreté Nationale, Paris. All five men were good friends, and thanks to Monsieur Louwage's initiative the Palais de Justice at Brussels, a noble building left in flame by the retreating Nazis in 1944, became on June 3rd, 1946, the venue of a fresh International Police Conference, the object of which was to reconstitute I.C.P.C.

The following nations were represented; Belgium, Chile, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Egypt, France, Great Britain, Holland, Iran, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and Yugoslavia. Delegates from Greece and the United States had been invited but were unable to attend.

As permanent rapporteur of the old Commission Monsieur Louwage took responsibility for convening the meeting. In his opening address he related how he had searched in Berlin with the help of the British and American military police and succeeded in recovering some of the pre-war I.C.P.C. records, including committee memoranda on administrative matters and the minutes of previous meetings. The criminal dossiers appeared to have vanished, however. They were probably lost, or dispersed, beyond recovery, in the general confusion preceding the City's surrender. No invading force, so far as is known, seized and burnt them. Happily, Belgium's international criminal records, kept in the

Palais de Justice, throughout the German occupation, were salvaged, and with other nations, preserving also their international documentation, the reborn Interpol did not need to start from scratch. In fact, through member states, it received very useful information, and information still of service to-day, about some of its pre-war 'customers'. A small sub-committee under the chairmanship of Mr. (now Sir) Ronald Howe had to decide on the location of a new headquarters for Interpol. A wise choice was vital. Vienna could no longer be considered a suitable venue. Not only was the Austrian capital war-disfigured, but the split between East and West, or what, since Sir (then Mr.) Winston Churchill's Fulton speech on March 5th, 1946, the world has recognised as the Iron Curtain set up conflicting issues in its very midst. Nor, such is national hyper-sensitivity following an all out war, would the German language meet with everyone's approval as the fittest medium for Interpol's international correspondence. The City chosen, however, needed to be, if possible, a world communications centre, for the vision which inspired Interpol's re-creation, was not less bold than that which brought it into being. In fact, I like to think it was bolder, that, in June 1946, delegates realised they were putting no tentative scheme to work, but a well realised, invaluable organisation which, if rightly directed, must prove a mainspring of world wide police co-operation.

Mr Howe and his colleagues decided that Paris was the place. The French Government readily agreed to meet the responsibility, financial and administrative, such a headquarters would bring them. Both Holland and Czechoslovakia, however, put in a plea for the Commission's International Bureau to be established in their own countries. Fortunately, no bickering ensued. Thanks to the chairman's persuasiveness, both delegates finally withdrew their proposals in deference to the decision of Mr Howe's committee.

When English and French had been decided on as the Commission's official corresponding languages, Mr Simonovic, the Yugoslavian delegate, proposed that the Russian language should be added. The Polish delegate supported him. Each country, incidentally, gets one vote on all questions at Interpol assemblies, no matter how many delegates it may send. But since the Soviet Union had abstained from membership, several satellites also, this

question of a third language adoption, when put to the vote, was rejected.

As to the election of the Commission's President who by virtue of his office would naturally be chairman of the Executive Committee, there was no disagreement at all. Colonel Müller of Switzerland, jumping up, said, 'Our friend Louwage has rendered prominent services to the I.C.P.C. The reorganisation of the Commission is his work. We must all agree on his name.' Loud applause greeted this proposal. Popular, too, was the choice of Monsieur Ducloux of France as the Commission's new Secretary General. Delegates were then chosen to fill the offices of Vice-Presidents and General Rapporteurs of the Commission. A new code of statutes was devised, Article 1 of which defined the Commission's aims as follows:

The purpose of the International Criminal Police Commission is to ensure and officially promote the growth of the greatest possible mutual assistance between all criminal police authorities within the limits of the laws existing in the different States, to establish and develop all institutions likely to contribute to an efficient repression of Common Law crimes and offences to the strict exclusion of all matters having a political, religious or racial character.

The indefatigable President through his contacts with Dr. Dressler of Vienna, the last pre-war Secretary General of the I.C.P.C., had learned that the magnificent library accumulated by that father of criminologists, Dr. Hans Gross, had escaped war damage. This historic, private collection would, undoubtedly, be an asset to Interpol's International Bureau in Paris. But, alas, hope of its transfer was soon quashed. For the Austrian authorities, claiming proprietary rights over it, decided that it must stay in Vienna. And, in Vienna, it remains.

No one could charge the re-constituted Commission with extravagance. Offices were taken, first, in the Rue Alfred de Vigny, where a staff of two, namely Monsieur Lucien Aubé, the present head of Interpol's department of International Police Documentation, and Monsieur Jean Nepote, now assistant to the Secretary General, set to work, with Monsieur Ducloux, to lay the foundations of a new international anti-crime network. Much uphill work faced these pioneers. Varying degrees of trustfulness

between nations added, initially, to their difficulties. But, by tact and enterprise, Monsieur Ducloux began to forge a new instrument of international police surveillance and crime prevention. As work expanded, and additional staff, French crime specialists mainly, was enlisted, larger quarters were taken at No. 11 rue des Saussaies. The Commission's grip, tentative at first, soon began to range far and effectively.

Hence in 1949, when I.C.P.C. celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary, Monsieur Ducloux had every justification for re-assessing the Commission's aims in these terms:

'To establish rapid liaison between all criminal investigation branches so as to speed up the identification, arrest and trial of delinquents who have sought refuge abroad, fully enlighten courts as to the true personality of professional criminals, and provide legal experts, sociologists and scientific experts of all nations with the benefits of the discoveries made by the police through their direct contact with Common Law criminals.'

Although collaboration with countries behind the Iron Curtain had faded away by 1950, Interpol continued to gain steadily in its membership of national states. In June 1949 both Canada and Guatemala joined the Commission. Whereas the Canadian report centre was vested in the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Ottawa, that of Guatemala answered to the authority of the Director General of the Guardia Civil, Guatemala City. At the same time the Dutch authorities established new national central bureaux in the Netherlands Antilles, with the Public Prosecutor's Department at Willemstadt, Curacao, as one headquarters, and in the second instance at Paramaribo in Dutch Guiana. From 31 states in 1939, nine of which only were linked by radio network, Interpol counted a total membership of 44 national states and independent territories on January 1st, 1953; by January 1st, 1955, this total had risen to 51. Upon Monsieur Ducloux's compulsory retirement in June 1951, the Commission was again fortunate to secure another outstanding French police officer as its Secretary General, Monsieur Marcel Sicot, himself Inspector General of Training for the Sûreté Nationale, Paris.

Of cheerful disposition, a veteran in his experience of criminal tactics, he adds to his qualities of a first rate administrator those of a strong disciplinarian, and unbounding enthusiasm for I.C.P.C.'s

cause. Under his rule, Interpol has hardened into a term of world-wide respect among criminal police forces, and simultaneously, many of the more obnoxious and knowledgeable international crooks have learned to dread that symbol, much as a man dreads an ambush in the dark.

Following this change of stewardship, Interpol's headquarters underwent its third post-war change, and moved into new quarters at the offices of the French Ministry of the Interior at No. 60 Boulevard Gouvion St Cyr. Here at this long, rectangular, mouse-coloured block, the façade as grim as any prison and completely without artistry, with two gendarmes ever watchful on its steps, the Commission's permanent headquarters is now sited. The staff, just on forty strong, however, can scarcely feel themselves spoilt for living space. The visitor gets the impression, in each department, of much being concentrated into tight almost bursting cabinets with specialists tucked away in odd corners as the furniture permits.

It will be greatly advantageous if, before long, the Commission is able to hire or buy a separate building, so allowing full scope for the expansion of its services. And such expansion is inevitable, not only because of mounting demands from member states, but as each department widens its experience in the international crime field, so husbanding greater technical resources, then those resources, if corresponding police organisations are to benefit, must be efficiently housed.

In any organisation pledged to international service, it is of inestimable value for individual members of different countries, upon whose shoulders fall the main administrative responsibilities, to get to know each other personally and socially whatever barriers of nationality may lie between them. Not only are valuable discussions thus engendered in an amicable atmosphere, but new policies may be shaped, basic principles re-stated, or fresh schemes worked out to outwit malefactors in the common interest.

Interpol's Annual General Assemblies encourage this sort of fraternisation. Upwards of 150 delegates, all nominated by their respective Governments, attend each session, and since delegates consist of executive police officers, magistrates, jurists, lawyers, penal authorities and forensic scientists, off the record conversations, as experience proves, frequently tighten weak links in the

network of surveillance, and promote also, a more constructive spirit in the co-operation one nation affords to another. Moreover, there is the very human asset of learning to know and understand, if not actually to like, the fellow who copes, often with a very different national police technique behind him, with the same kind of 'customer' as yourself, although he sits perhaps at a desk a thousand or five thousand miles away from your headquarters.

Since 1946, the General Assembly, lasting from four to five days, has been held each year in a different European city. Those favoured to date include Brussels (1946), Paris (1947), Prague (1948), Berne (1949), The Hague (1950), Lisbon (1951), Stockholm (1952), Oslo (1953) and Rome (1954). And the twenty-fourth General Assembly will, provided no international deadlocks intervene, be held in Istanbul (1955).

From a hard beginning, indeed a start fraught with setbacks, Interpol may claim, not without price, to have triumphed over the paralysis imposed upon its germinal vision by the First World War, and to have overcome, even more conspicuously, the dead weight of liquidation which the Second World War thrust on it.

Conquest of obstructions so formidable does show that with the help of well-trained and stout-hearted individuals, backed by sensible Governments, nations will not be deterred from joining together their resources or pooling their knowledge upon specific subjects for mutual gain, in this instance, for the immeasurable gain of law and order within their spheres of jurisdiction. Mercifully also, national differences in temperament as well as in prejudice are being set aside as enthusiasm for this task warms.

The traveller in France to-day can scarcely fail to be impressed by this nation's fear and distrust of Western Germany's rearmament and economic resurrection as a world power. Happily there is no fear nor the least semblance of mistrust, in fact there is excellent liaison between Interpol's headquarters staff and Western Germany's Federal Police Department at Wiesbaden, the reporting centre for Interpol inquiries in Germany. In the long run, such tangible foundations may do more than merely sweep aside ancient animosities.

CHAPTER THREE

THE FINGERS OF SEARCH

*We watch while these in equilibrium keep
The giddy line midway; one step aside,
They're classed and done with.*

BROWNING, Bishop Blougham's Apology

THREE KINDS OF CIRCULATION

INTERNATIONAL criminals, however adroit in mischief making, should be wary, ill at ease and, if their sensibilities are not wholly negative, beset by shadows of approaching justice, whenever they become the object of an Interpol 'circulation'. The Commission uses this now internationally recognised document in three forms, each descriptive and individual in character, and each a probing fork, the tines of which have pinioning powers, in its struggle against the world's travelling criminality. For while search is the document's purpose, the search, so initiated, is often tantamount to the triple request of 'seek, hold and deliver'.

The circulations, of top priority, are red-cornered. Swift action should follow their reception, for the red spells urgency; it may even spell danger for the country, which, unwittingly, is harbouring the wanted man. The request, so presented—international policemen are unfailingly courteous with their dealings, one with another—means that the person, described in the circulation, should be arrested when found, and extradited.

Circulations of the second sort, blue-cornered or tabbed, serve as gatherers of information about suspects or persons allegedly unreliable. Particulars may thus be sought about an individual's present whereabouts, his movements on a certain date, his mode

of life, his true name, his aliases, his record of convictions, or even his family relationships.

The third kind, green-cornered, tell the N.C.B.'s, which receive them, that the person to whom they refer should not be left unobserved. If not from his record, a notorious character, then his criminal activities do suggest that, as he moves from one country to another, the legitimacy of any business, in which he may be engaging, should be investigated. Such circulations play a valued role to-day in the prevention of crime.

But, though the purpose of each circulation is clear, let no-one suppose that their issue, according to one or other of these three categories, is half as straightforward as it might seem. In practice, many precautions, some a little irritating to quick acting policemen, must be observed before such circulations can be transmitted, in the certainty that they will lead to the action desired.

For instance, before it can put out the priority one or arrest circulation, the International Bureau must be satisfied that the grounds, on which the requesting authority seeks an individual's arrest, do not conflict with the provisions of its statutes. At times in the past, states, either through innocence or by intent, have sought the Commission's help to secure the arrest of persons suspected of political crimes or, in extreme cases, a charge may be manufactured against a man solely to bring him back, as a common law criminal, to a country, from which he has escaped for political reasons alone.

Whenever the General Secretariat is in the least doubtful about the legitimacy of any request for an individual's arrest, or the request itself appears to its specialists to be founded on a vague charge, then the International Bureau, as agreed at Interpol's 20th General Assembly, held at Lisbon in June 1951, is fully authorised to ask the requesting authority for further details or, if necessary, an explanation of the charge specified.

Again, circulations cannot be effective unless the action they initiate is subordinate to the strict rules of procedure laid down and observed by international jurists and upheld by the judicial authorities in each country subscribing to the Commission's maintenance. Most nations to-day permit their police to hold a suspect in custody for only 24 hours, or a maximum of 48 hours, before he is brought before an examining magistrate. If then, the

grounds for his continued detention appear to lack validity, he must be released.

So, within this period, evidence must be available, to the court's satisfaction, that the foreign country, which requested the individual's arrest, desires to proceed with the proper extradition formalities. Hence no nation should ask the International Bureau to put out a red-cornered circulation unless

- (a) the offence alleged against the individual is a crime against common law;
- (b) a warrant or equivalent document is out for his arrest;
- (c) the authority demanding the arrest is in a position to request extradition when the wanted man is detained.

'Precision with science', a good text for most police officers, must govern, no less closely, the issue of blue tabbed circulations. Sometimes the International Bureau finds itself bemused when the information, on which it is expected to circularise such a request is of the scantiest, and supported merely by ambiguous details. A general description with reference to a bald-headed man, weighty about the middle, fond of drink, with a rolling gait, normally describing himself as Tom Jones or Fritz Schmidt, is of little assistance and must be referred back to sender, politely perhaps, but in terms, suggestive of its true value, as a 'dead pan' inquiry.

Where, however, police practice conforms with intelligence, the International Bureau is almost certain to receive concise information accompanied, whenever possible, by the individual's fingerprints, perhaps photographs as well, a portrait parlé (spoken description), and perhaps a note or two about his *modus operandi*, habits, and likely hide-outs. If then the I.B.'s dossiers cannot furnish the information desired, an international circulation, based on this data, is made out, and transmitted, as a rule by air mail, but in cases of exceptional urgency, by radio to the National Central Bureaux. And, sometimes, greatly to the surprise of the initiators, the details they seek are furnished, eventually, by countries far remote from those where they imagined their man to be hiding, or to have lived.

The problem of missing persons is a world-wide one. But, unless they are suspected of criminal offences, such persons cannot

be the subject of Interpol's blue circulations. Daily, indeed, in almost all countries, girls and young women disappear from their normal places of residence, their homes, hostels or lodgings. They leave no word behind them. Some flit through fretfulness, others in spite, or to stage a rebellious counterstroke to some parental repression. Others again run off with some man, or merely hide themselves, temporarily, because of some act of which they are ashamed.

Not one of these reasons justifies the International Bureau's intervention, even if the missing girl was last seen boarding a Continental steamer at Harwich or Folkestone. But should her home police force suspect she has fallen prey to a white slaver or into the clutches of some other nefarious international crook, then her circulation and discovery may very properly call on Interpol's resources.

There is, of course, no more satisfactory way of maintaining law and order than by preventing criminal activity, and the tighter the surveillance of lawless elements in any population, the more effective such prevention must be. It is also cheaper. Untold energy, and quite remarkable expense add up frequently to a heavy bill, which a nation must foot, merely to bring about the arrest of a single criminal after his coup or 'kill'. So, the green tabbed circulations, if not so dramatic in result as the red and the blue, may be even more effective in keeping the peace on an international plane. Criminals, whose sole use of freedom is to abuse it, if they travel hopefully, may find it much wiser never to arrive!

Until November 7th, 1952, the International Bureau categorised all its most troublesome 'international customers' under a single heading. But now so inflexible a system has been set aside, and three categories of habitual international offenders are recognised to-day.

(1) Dangerous recidivists. These are men and women, about 2,000 in all, whose seemingly incorrigible addiction to crime, whether violent or corruptive in character, stamps them as persons to be watched.

(2) Wide-ranging internationals. These are men and women favouring a wide field, sometimes as broad as five Continents, over which to range and manipulate their rackets. Such rackets are, in

some cases, minor ones, like a habit of leaving unpaid hotel bills behind one, or sneak thieving. But many such customers indulge in large scale crimes, laying paper trails of false cheques behind them, or building up new cells for their drug, currency or black market gold trafficking. Convicted already in several different countries, they ought not to enjoy the normal citizen's freedom of movement, or freedom from police observation, when they cross from one frontier to another.

(3) Traffickers in international evil. Criminals, in this category, may rarely leave the country of their upbringing, but because of their forte as manufacturers of illicit drug compounds, or counterfeit money, they disseminate the very raw stuffs of international disorder. So, whenever they change their national scene, a green circulation should, for safety and humanity's sake, chase them.

CONTENTS OF CIRCULATIONS

Particulars which these circulations bear vary naturally according to police knowledge of an individual, but the police officers whose duty is to receive and act on them look chiefly for fundamental details of identity. Of prime importance is their subject's true name, nationality, his date and place of birth, any aliases he may use, the name, address and nationality of his wife or family. His portrait *parlé* must be presented in recognisable detail, not loosely, with special emphasis on any striking characteristics, moles, wounds, scars, a cleft chin, hare lip, broken nose, deformed ear lobe, or some agitation peculiar to him.

If already a man with a criminal record, the circulation will carry photographs, presenting him in full view and profile. The date when they were taken will not be overlooked. For after a while, many photographs, even official ones, can give a false impression of their subject, unless there is something distinctive, morphologically, about his features. If, as a hardened crook, he feels his face sticks out like a full moon, he can adopt disguises; natural ones, like a French beard, pencil-lined or toothbrush moustache, or artificial ones, like false dentures, with artfully designed protruberances, perhaps a wig, or he may submit via plastic surgery's aid to a new nasal line, or even a cheek grafting.

Police researchists while treating photographs with caution

entertain no such qualms about fingerprints. They expect Interpol's circulations to show them a complete set. These impressions assist as no other feature C.I.D.'s to identify individuals who switch their crimes from country to country and, at the same time, alter their names with equal facility. The International Bureau has record of some 'characters' known to use twenty or more different aliases in a year.

Notice of the subject's criminal record also helps those who must seek him. The sort of crimes he favours may well be a pointer to the sort of companions he may seek in the local underworld. Here, also, brief but precise details are conveyed, record of his offences, prison sentences, the places where he came up for judgement, and relevant dates.

Officials staffing National Central Bureaux know that one hundred per cent accuracy is impossible under this heading. For the International Bureau would need a staff running into hundreds to keep accurate track of all its 'customers'. Sentences may be altered on appeal, even quashed, or reviewed periodically with results not forwarded to Paris, and periods of remission earned by good conduct vary from country to country. So, although the criminal record, conveyed by these circulations, is not accepted as absolutely authoritative, it is, of course, a pretty useful guide, especially where the list of offences is heavy, to a subject's character and underworld interests.

There is a section for miscellaneous observations. As a rule, it contains references to the criminal's accomplices or friends, his usual resorts, his *modus operandi*, and any outstanding habit or trait of his, useful for identification purposes.

When the Commission first resumed business after its post-war reconstitution, circulations, as agreed at the Brussels Conference, were issued exclusively on the subject of criminal specialities. However, experience since then shows that international gangsters rarely stick to one type of crime. The worst of them exploit many channels of gain, thereby not only distributing their risks, but hoping by such mixed tactics to baffle detection. So to-day references to *modus operandi* are confined to the miscellaneous column. There, reviewed in relation to other facts, this information sometimes leads to a criminal being unmasked when, tired of new dodges, he falls back on an old trick.

Then, although its corner colour signifies each circulation's purpose, this purpose is also expressed in writing. Nor is any circulation now launched on its travels without the protective wording 'Confidential, for the sole use of police and Judicial authorities'.

Formerly in some countries, not conspicuous for the confidential character of their police work, Interpol's circulations passed, on occasion, into an embarrassing variety of unofficial hands. Mis-guided officers handed copies direct to the press, sometimes members of the general public were given a look, and sometimes, even the criminals referred to, or their lawyers obtained copies. When a malefactor can discover exactly what is known about him, he obviously can take avoiding action far more effectively than if he proceeds in ignorance of a forewarned authority.

HEADQUARTERS ORGANISATION

The International Bureau, presided over by Monsieur Sicot, respects flexibility in its daily dealings to counteract international malefactors. The staff, highly trained and intelligent crime specialists, never engage in the mere methodical distribution of search material. Each case is treated with resourcefulness, and skill. For just as criminals constantly alter their tactics, the forces in opposition must be no less agile-minded, and speed in action, as a counter-measure, is of topmost priority, but it must be conditioned by precise knowledge and adroit action.

Much routine work is unavoidable, but the newcomer will nowhere find boredom seeping into the severely furnished offices, occupied by Interpol's headquarters in the Boulevard Gouvion St Cyr. The motto one feels most suited to the I.B. is 'scientific adaptation to criminal subtlety'. And this is well interpreted because most of those, active in the organisation's services, possess a thoroughly realistic vision of the ins and outs of criminal tactics as disclosed by police experiences over the international front.

With a General Secretariat, responsible for administrative matters, the I.B. is divided into sections as follows: criminal dossiers and records; counterfeiting and illicit drug trafficking; fraud and confidence trickery cases; individual police documentation; technical library; translators' pool; and publications depart-

ment. There need be no surprise to discover counterfeiting and drug trafficking grouped together. For in practice these two offences, though at variance in menace, often tie up into a single skein of villainy. Bad money at times begets illicit drugs and vice versa.

The library, tightly pressed for space like other departments, houses to date 700 volumes written chiefly in English, French, German, Spanish and Italian. There is much strong fare here for the expert investigator, whether, to give a sample survey, his interests relate to criminal psychology, graphology, criminal tactics, juvenile delinquency, medical studies of insanity and criminal responsibility, police training, penal reform, toxicology, fingerprinting systems, psychiatry, sexology, forensic medicine or C.I.D. histories. New books, mostly presentation copies, trickle in at the rate of 6 to 12 monthly. The librarian receives also approximately 210 police journals and magazines monthly, which he files after first cataloguing their contents, and miscellaneous publications, received in a month, may total over 1,300. A quarterly list of selected articles is published and distributed to member states. Each article, so selected, is presented with a brief summary in English and French of its contents, the name of its author, review, number of the volume, country of issue, date and page numbers. The list, moreover, is well indexed, beginning as a rule with Abortion and ending with Women Police on its English side, while the index in French runs from Accidents to Vol. On receiving this publication, subscribers may then if interested in a particular article ask for a microfilm copy, and this service, increasingly widely used, now dispatches specialists' features by microfilm to accredited authorities from Rangoon to Rio de Janeiro or, if you like it better, from Helsinki to Bangkok.

The I.B. fights by the book in a more combative sense. For, as must be plain, the value of its International Circulations is much enhanced, if their background information about each suspect is up to date and accurate. The organisation's filing specialists can show the privileged visitor dispassionate records of almost every folly known to man. But these dossiers, deservedly considered the indispensable tools of investigation, would be little better than museum pieces, if they did not yield whatever information was

sought at top speed. Hence, they are arranged in a variety of categories, each conducive to swift recognition.

The main register, the simplest, is a straightforward alphabetical card index. The cards, so grouped at the beginning of 1955, exceeded 200,000. But since each criminal's alias is also carded for cross reference purposes, this tally must not be mistaken as a true reflection of Interpol's total 'customers'. Some crooks would be astonished if, peering over the shoulder of someone, as he flicked over these cards, they saw their own names recorded in each one of their six and sixty different aliases.

Not all names imprisoned in this register count as notorious or dangerous. Some belong merely to petty thieves, tourists on the grab, shop lifters, railway ticket bilkers, handbag snatchers, smash and grab merchants, false money utterers, prostitutes, and those rascals, of all nationalities, who every year scheme to get a free holiday in some foreign hotel or boarding house as they skip off, leaving their bills unpaid, and often a false name and address behind to cover their escape tracks.

The most comprehensive of the I.B.'s files is based on a phonetic card index system. Here original spellings are ignored, all names being filed according to their pronunciation in the French language. Beneath them, everything useful, in a police sense, that is known about their owners is recorded. In international police correspondence, communications might easily break down over the spelling of individual names, especially of Russian or Chinese origin. Such names bandied about in different European languages could become as addled as any egg, and finally, as unmanageable. However, by adhering to the basis of a common consonance, this difficulty with its attending tongue-twisting confusions is overcome. In January 1955, these files carried 80,000 names believed to be true names of international criminals, accompanied by their owners' records and identity data. Of this number, 30,000 have been added in the last three years. Approximately nine per cent relate to the female sex, mostly girl friends of malefactors, and not 'internationals' in their own demerit.

To these weapons in nomenclature, two fingerprinting systems are added. There is the ten fingerprint file based on the Galton system. Provided it does not grow too big, and thereby unwieldy, this system is rated the most accurate, yet devised, for identifying

individuals by study of their papillary traces. But to help in cutting down on search time—sometimes the delay of a few minutes may assist a criminal to get away from an airport where he might have been arrested—the ten print system has as its ally a single fingerprint file. Here one trace only is recorded. And criminals, allegedly dangerous, alone earn this attention. Then, if presented with blurred prints difficult to identify, the specialist can turn to this file, and check up quickly to discover if it fits in with anybody in the ultra dangerous category. Thus the man with a bad record may be cheated of that vital extra 'escape time' while a more detailed search for his traces is being made in the ten fingerprint file.

The International Bureau has also to recognise and overcome the inconvenience of having at times a few straws only of tangible evidence with which to verify or dig out a malefactor's identity. There are no names, and no fingerprints, but perhaps someone noticed a peculiarity about the unknown suspect's face. Here the photographic register may furnish a useful guide, if not the full answer. Based on the speaking likeness system, developed by Bertillon, this index records in code form the right profile of each subject's face. So, by the line of a man's nose, the shape of his ear lobe, the tilt of his chin, or by the angle made by his nose's base, to mention some of the characteristics thus catalogued, he may be traced, and caught.

The archives contain, too, a specialties register or methods index, in which each technique, ordinary as well as unusual is listed, together with the names of its practitioners. But, less ordinary, from a C.I.D. viewpoint, and often highly rewarding in result, is the synoptic file, devoted to the personal habits of criminals. For each man has some trait or habit, which he carries through life with him; he may finger his tie, rummage in his beard, beat a tattoo with his feet, scratch his ear or nose, clasp his hands above his head, run his fingers continually through his hair, stroke his left or right ear lobe, carry a cigarette behind his ear, affect ear-rings, or a peculiar type of finger ring, squint, flutter his eyelashes, crack his fingers together, bite his nails, be frequently hitching up his trousers, drum his fist or fingers on his knees, or even suck a thumb when cogitating. Originally, this file was opened with thirty-five personal characteristics; now it records forty-

eight of this type; and such factors, as detectives appreciate, often betray a man far more readily than the colour of his eyes, his height, or photograph.

The final weapon in the headquarter's armoury, designed to stimulate interest in the whole field of crime detection, criminal psychology, and police work, is Interpol's well-designed black and gold covered *International Criminal Police Review*. Published ten times a year, in French and English, at the I.B., but also printed and published, since January 1954, in German and Spanish editions through the agency of Interpol offices in Wiesbaden and Madrid, it is of invaluable service to magistrates and police officials, no less than to jurists, criminologists, doctors and psychiatrists, in fact to all whose lawful professional business brings them into direct contact with crime.

Examples are always dangerous, for the writer can hardly avoid suspicion of prejudice in his choice. But, ignore this for a moment. In the April 1953 issue, No. 67 of the post war series, the magazine carries three studies, the range of which, apart from their intrinsic interest, well illustrate its realistic outlook. Thus, Monsieur F. E. Louwage discusses the pros and cons of Police Interrogations, Mr. (now Sir) Ronald Howe writes about Disguised Cars in England, and Monsieur R. Taupin, Commissaire Divisionnaire, and Head of the Department of Racing and Gambling, Sûreté Nationale, exposes the tricks of card sharpers, accompanying his text with first-rate, indeed fascinating pictures of playing cards marked according to varied and ingenious techniques. A constructive approach informs most issues. Detailed studies of case histories, pointing to some valuable lesson in detection, appear alongside studies of fraudulent paintings, counterfeiting operations, the science of moulage, identifications of charred bodies in aircraft crashes, identification of hair traces, use of police dogs, and efficacy of the lie detector.

The International Editorial Committee deserves praise for its selection of contributions. Without doubt, subscribers, paying 25 Swiss Francs a year, generally by international money order, for their ten issues get at low cost a privileged insight into their craft, or sister aspects of it. Interpol's two pre-war publications *International Public Safety* and *International Criminal Police* lacked bite or reality in contrast, their fields of survey more limited, and authority less pronounced.

ANTI-COUNTERFEITING RESOURCES

Counterfeiters of bank notes often end as poverty-harried, disillusioned men. While in practice, however, they aim high, and the ramifications of international gangs, specialising in false money conspiracies, stretch far. As a counter Interpol maintains at The Hague, with the active co-operation and financial support of the Dutch Government, an anti-counterfeiting section. To it, an International Bureau staff member is seconded, and the head of it, Mr. J. W. Kallenborn, is responsible for keeping a strict watch over fraudulent money issues of all denominations. To achieve this, legal issues must be studied also, and no less comprehensively—over a world front. The section thus assists inquiring police officers to identify counterfeiting gangs by reference to their productions, i.e. composition of the inks used, engraving styles, errors in lettering shapes and other craft 'signs' disclosed by chemical and microscopic analysis of individual notes.

The section is quartered at No. 47 Raamweg, the police department of the Dutch Ministry of Justice. And here, as an invaluable background to its researches, President F. E. Louwage opened in June 1950 a unique museum stocked with examples of forged currencies. Pre-war as well as post-war examples are included, since thanks to the initiative of Mr. A. J. Adler, former head of the department, but now retired, a selection of the Commission's counterfeit specimen files was recovered from its offices in Vienna. Of the false money exhibits, 4,749 specimens are of forged bank-notes and 315 specimens counterfeit coins. Neatly recorded, too, are examples of forger's tools, together with the photographs, circulations and records of some master practitioners.

A 'bank' of legal currencies, 1,751 examples in paper, and 1,188 examples in coin, but marked 'specimens only' on most of the notes, is kept as carefully as the fraudulent counterparts. Of the 2,500 counterfeiting actions, notified since 1946, the U.S. dollar bill as top ranking currency also exercised most widely the counterfeiter's fancies. More than 400 different counterfeited examples or patterns of it, in value from 5 to 100 dollars, have been detected; by contrast, counterfeiters have unwittingly turned in, during the same period, some 120 different patterns of the West German deutschmark and reproduced

Bank of England £1 notes in approximately 35 different guises.

Forgers still occasionally manufacture coins, but this crime is to-day of much less serious occurrence than formerly among the more technically advanced nations. From Java, the Museum has a counterfeiter's wooden press, a toy-like, but intriguing contraption. *For, with this device, the counterfeiter took a white hot coin, laid it on his press, then clamping the wooden bars together, secured a sizzling but reasonably accurate impression of both faces of his coin, its reverse and obverse. Thereafter, with these branded depressions as his mould, he set to work to fabricate his own pieces.*

Every fake currency seizure, notified to the International Bureau by member police forces, is booked here. Down into the register go the actual number and values of the notes seized. Specimens are filed wherever possible, together with records of serial numbers, place where the counterfeits were detected, their source of origin or manufacture if known, and distinctions in design, such as character of their lettering, depth or clarity of the main portrait, watermark's quality, chemical contents of the ink, and paper texture. Most counterfeiters 'sign' their handiwork as openly as if they had left a beautifully defined impression of their fingerprints on each note.

It is the office's duty to compile, publish and distribute Interpol's *Counterfeits and Forgeries Review*. Banks, insurance offices, sometimes travel bureaux and other commercial undertakings, needing to watch for false money utterers, are permitted to subscribe to this publication. Prudent firms grasp its advantages, and the book never falls out of date, for new record sheets are published quarterly and circulated to subscribers. It is designed as follows:

Folio 1. Counterfeits and Forgeries has four sections:

- (a) Counterfeit notes and counterfeit coins;
- (b) Counterfeit cheques, securities and documents;
- (c) False passports;
- (d) Miscellaneous forgeries.

Its text is naturally as well illustrated as possible. Folio 2, with two sections, is divided into (a) Notes and coins in legal circulation and (b) Notes and coins withdrawn from circulation. So, the book

of truth travels, in effect, in company with the book of fabrications.

The quarterly picture of monetary issues, thus presented, helps to keep many a clerk vigilant for forged notes; whereas, unwarned and his interest unstimulated, he might cheerfully accept fake money bills of substantial values and pay out genuine cash in exchange.

Of the museum's rarer treasures, I fancy most the examples of the Russian Smolianoff's forgeries of £5 and £10 Bank of England notes. They are works of art. Curiously, the section's present chief, Mr. Kallenborn, as a young detective, arrested the Russian in Amsterdam in 1927, and charged him with forgery. That was the first occasion his handiwork attracted public notice, and some £5 notes, then seized from him, now adorn the museum's treasury of counterfeits. Never for an instant did the detective dream that he had in his custody the twentieth century's (at least the first half of it) most skilled counterfeiter of bank notes. Beside Smolianoff's picture, exhibited here, is the picture of the man who, allegedly, taught him his craft, his compatriot, Miassojedoff, a patriarchal, white-bearded figure. There is shown, too, the Hungarian Prince, Windisch, who, in 1925, tried to flood Western Europe with forged French 1,000 franc notes. It was his plot for his agents to use them for buying diamonds in Amsterdam which he then intended to convert into armaments for his pitifully weaponed country. Examples of these notes may be examined, and also specimens of the Portuguese banknotes made by a highly reputable English firm, ostensibly for the Portuguese Government, but as it discovered, its true customers were the very opposite of Government agents. There are several lovely examples of genuine currency watermarks, the Japanese being the finest, with their delicately limned lotus flowers and sailing vessels—proof indeed of exquisite skills.

One panel parades counterfeiters' mistakes. Magnification exposes the tiniest flaws, but a glance is enough to detect some errors. One gentleman appointed himself to the Diplomatic Corps. He took extreme pains to forge a Diplomatic Pass, stocking it with a most impressive array of visas, all neatly stamped, with signatures of the issuing 'authorities' adroitly forged. Yet one most elementary fact escaped him. In golden lettering on the cover, he inscribed the legend 'Passport Diplomatique'. It was

not quite the perfect French he supposed it to be. For, in deference to that elegant and precise language, he ought to have written 'Passeport'. So by the omission of an 'e', he was arrested.

COMMUNICATIONS

Urgent messages travel by radio, but where there is more time, Interpol's far scattered units communicate by telephone, telegram, airmail and surface post. Because each National Central Bureau is a small unit, highly specialised in character, but tremendously powerful in scope, mere administrative paper work and time-wasting correspondence are eliminated. The lines, uncluttered, are in fact strictly streamlined. At each N.C.B., too, or within easy access of it, one individual is named as the Interpol Representative for his country. He represents his Government at its International Conferences, and also on all consultative subjects. In Britain, this is Mr. (now Sir) Ronald Howe, the Interpol Office for the U.K. being a relatively new seedling planted on the C.I.D. at New Scotland Yard; in Italy, Dr. Giuseppe Dosi of Questura Headquarters, Rome, has this position; in Western Germany, it is Dr. Paul Dickopf of Police Headquarters, Wiesbaden; in France, M. Henry Couturier of the Sûreté Nationale Paris; in Belgium, M. F. Franssen of the Ministry of Justice, Brussels; in Turkey, M. Riza Azmi Yumak, Director of Public Safety, Ankara, and so forth. America's membership is peculiar. Here, however, where Interpol's interventions are limited to crimes of nation wide, as opposed to state interest, crimes such as drug-trafficking and counterfeiting, the Treasury Department at Washington acts as the corresponding unit.

Such representatives or their bureaux have at call rapid means of communications within the framework of their own national police forces. Any demand on their resources, originating from the I.B. in Paris or directly from any other N.C.B. can be switched, without appreciable time lag, to the most distant or isolated police station within the jurisdiction of their country. Thus, by an international radio network, superimposed upon internal meshworks, the search weapon that is poised to pinpoint the international crook can develop, when urgent need arises, exceptional speed and accuracy.

Procedure in Switzerland may be mentioned not alone for the pleasure of considering technicalities, if one must consider them, within the peaks of that delectable country. But here, one sees plainly how this overall surveillance, adopted by nations where police control is alert and well mannered, functions without being in the least sense obtrusive or meddlesome. At Zurich, on the fourth floor, at Police Headquarters in 29 Kasernenstrasse, the Federal Government maintains its Meldedienst (Report Service). Well equipped scientifically (I must say, ticking over as flawlessly as a Swiss watch!) the information room here listens into the I.B.'s Paris transmissions at set intervals daily. The same thing is happening via short wave radio sets set up at police headquarters in Brussels, Copenhagen, Helsinki, Lisbon, London, Luxembourg, Madrid, Oslo, Rabat, Rome, Sarrebruck, Stockholm, Tel-Aviv, Tunis, Utrecht, Vienna and Wiesbaden.

The Swiss police act, of course, only on messages of direct concern to Swiss interests, but, when required, they can act fast. An ancillary transmitting station stands on elevated ground at Waltikon, 12 kilometres outside Zurich, through which the Meldedienst can give all station broadcasts or get into individual contact with any one of Switzerland's five other police radio stations, sited respectively at Basel, Berne, Geneva, Lausanne and St Gallen. All these stations can then distribute by teleprinter the text of any message, so received, to the smallest police units grouped within their network. The entire country is thus under survey. Hence Interpol's voice may penetrate at the pace of lightning strokes into any obscure village, tucked away upon some eidelweiss-starred Alpine slope, and beyond. For Switzerland, as an administrative convenience, has allied its police communications to those of the Principality of Lichtenstein, and international messages which it receives are thus retransmitted, whenever applicable, over the border for information or action. Not that crooks very often flee to mountainous haunts for refuge. Huge cities, with their self-obliterating cosmopolitan crowds or their smoke-clotted, funk-hole ridden slums are much more their cup of tea.

In its resolve not to be outpaced by the high speed manoeuvres of to-day's criminals, Interpol started to build in 1954 its own

radio station at Lagny-sur-Marne, south of Paris. To date, the I.B. has relied on facilities for transmission afforded by the French Ministry of the Interior. When this innovation is complete, the service's scope may be much extended.

Soon not just a dozen countries, but all member states will, it is hoped, be on watch. European police forces have so far reaped the chief benefit from Interpol's services. But with the Commission's ever widening membership, extending now from Cuba to the Coral Islands, and the tendency of international mischief makers to leapfrog continents on the impulse, circulations transmitted from Paris may before long be as invaluable to States in South East Asia as to those in Central America, Africa, or the Middle East.

Wherever there exists a geographically well-defined land area, made up of different countries, argument can be found for providing such a block with its own anti-criminal broadcasting central station for employment against malefactors who operate within the area of its land mass alone. But who is to say to Mr. 'Twist-me-Rich or Mr. I. Kill Thug of Santiago or Manilla that he must play the game, and not let his mischief making rove beyond the orbit of his zonal search station?

Widening membership means ever widening responsibilities. For it is each country's privilege on joining Interpol, irrespective of its size, influence, wealth or living standards, to possess equal rights with every other member state or independent territory. So, full rights accrue to it, to use the Commission's services for information, and request searches through the agency of the I.B., or any N.C.B., whenever it believes Interpol's interventions can help.

FINANCIAL PROBLEMS

The one serious restrictive factor from which Interpol can no more escape than any other international organisation is budgetary. Three times since the Commission's reconstitution in June 1946 subscription rates for member states have had to be raised. The accountancy system is in Swiss francs. Originally, at the Brussels Conference, after a financial committee had put forward its recommendations the Assembly agreed to levy contributions on member states as follows:

- (a) Countries with fewer than 10 million inhabitants paid 2.50 Swiss francs per annum for every 10,000 head of population;
- (b) Countries with populations above 10 million but under 20 million paid 2.50 Swiss francs per annum for every 12,500 inhabitants;
- (c) Countries with populations that exceeded 20 million but were under 50 million, paid 2.50 Swiss francs per annum for every 15,000 inhabitants;
- (d) Countries whose populations topped 50 million were asked to contribute 2.50 Swiss francs per annum for every 25,000 inhabitants.

In 1950 the same population indexes applied, but the basic rate was changed to 5 Swiss francs instead of 2.50, and, in 1954 it was doubled afresh.

A few nations, not necessarily those with the most teeming populations, pay only a fraction of their dues even under this revised but still modest scale of contributions. In spite, moreover, of this augmented income, the International Bureau still depends very substantially for its running expenses as well as for its accommodation and staff on the generosity of the French Government. In 1953, the French contribution amounted to just over seventy-two per cent of the organisation's running costs; that from Britain was under two per cent. After France Holland bears the heaviest cost, chiefly because of the Dutch interest in Interpol's anti-counterfeiting section at The Hague. The Dutch contribution, again on 1953's statistics, provided just over five per cent of the organisation's running costs.

No-one can dispute Interpol's urgent need for additional funds. The search for money must never grow as relentless as the search for criminals, but it is needed mainly for (a) the gradual equipment of the international radio station, (b) the installation and running of a photographic laboratory, and (c) the employment of additional staff, preferably with some specialists of non-French nationality among them, to cope with the constantly increasing flow of daily activity in all departments. And, any surplus cash then available, can be set aside for the purchase or rental of separate offices!

Much, indeed, as France's benevolence is appreciated, it is

assuredly contrary to the unwritten laws, buttressing the constitution of any international body, that one nation should bear either temporarily or indefinitely a disproportionate cost of its maintenance. Interpol's researches are certainly not more favourable to France than to several other countries. Nor would it be right for one country to lean more heavily on an international organisation than another.

Member states at present must be grateful that France has shouldered this responsibility, and additionally grateful that the International Bureau's staff, ably directed by Monsieur Sicot, have and continue to exercise an international spirit in their work, a spirit far removed from partisan or linguistic prejudices. But the principle is, I suggest, ill-founded and liable if continued over long to disrupt the best disciplined, most tactfully managed, and smooth working administration.

So, with an apprehension raised and ventilated, let's to crime!

CHAPTER FOUR

DECEIVERS GALORE

*And be these juggling fiends no more believ'd,
That palter with us in a double sense :
That keep the word of promise to our ear,
And break it to our hope.*

SHAKESPEARE, *Macbeth*

THE swindler's craft can be mastered with very few lessons, provided a man counts among the gifts smuggled by evil genius into his birthchamber an abundance of charm, overweening sense of self importance, no moral principles and power to spin a story, with its meshes as finely interlinked and tightly drawn as those found in the best constructed spider's web. For, the chief reason why these ill-doers prosper, greatly to the concern of police officers in all countries, lies with the virtually unchanging gullibility of man.

Modern education, one might suppose, would tend to drive this gullibility into a backwater. But, so far from being routed by education or any other factor, distinguishing civilisation to-day, it seems to defy alike retreat and repression. Perhaps the enormous spirit of optimism, generated by the football pool habit, helps to inculcate exactly the frame of mind which a clever trickster succeeds in planting in his victim—the belief that by a timely outlay, a man of moderate wealth can overnight lift himself up into the millionaire class. Or, the trickster may amass a fortune not by defrauding one person but by defrauding thousands with an elementary trick.

An American once booked an advertisement in a small town newspaper, the text of which ran 'Send Me a Dollar'. His name

and address followed, both genuine. Perhaps hardly a reader's imagination was set on fire by that request. But a few days later, when a second advertisement appeared, under the same name and address, but with the legend 'you still have one more month to send me a dollar', fancies began to quicken. Several readers dipped into their pockets. But, such interest was insignificant when measured against that aroused by the final announcement. 'To-morrow will be too late. Now is your last opportunity to send me a dollar.' Dollars flooded in. The advertiser grinned, and pocketed close on 150,000 dollars in all. When some depositors complained, and police inquiries were made, the advertiser merely retorted with a smug smile that he had promised nothing, so could not be held to have cheated anyone. As it was, he counted himself extraordinary lucky to be the recipient of so striking an example of public generosity.

'Little at a time, but lots of times repeated' was the slogan, too, of a German engineer who aspired to cash in on a deceit originally launched by one of the prime deceivers of history, Adolph Hitler. Quite early in his misbegotten régime, Hitler persuaded thousands of German people to put down a deposit, up to 1,000 marks, in expectation of a Volkswagen. This Fuehrer call attracted 300,000 subscribers, but not one of them saw a Volkswagen for his money, nor did he get his money back. The total sum, thus contributed, helped to swell the armament's fund. In 1950, however, a German engineer, remembering the Fuehrer's ruse, schemed to turn it to his own advantage. For, as he advertised, for the modest payment of 5 marks, he was in a position to start proceedings for any pre-war disappointed Volkswagen subscriber, so that his claim could be validated, and, in no time, he would find himself a privileged purchaser of one of the new post-war people's cars. Despite disclaimers, also published in the newspapers, the engineer's scheme netted him 13,000 D.M. before the police visited him. So, many defrauded clients under one régime paid a 5 mark 'tax' for their gullibility under the next form of government favoured by their remarkable country.

However, the swindlers, whose activities Interpol is most concerned to stamp out, scheme as a rule on a lavish scale. Some of the more audacious spend hundreds of pounds building up the background for a coup. But, the money, they know, is well spent.

They are psychologists enough to know exactly how to trade on the weakness of their intended victim, perhaps on his vanity, his greed, his desire for fame (how often they reward that with notoriety), or perhaps they exploit some racial, religious, or charitable preference of his. Whatever weakness they select, you can be sure they play upon it with masterly concentration, forestalling suspicion, inspiring the most warm-hearted trust, and ultimately inflating the patient's optimism with rosy hopes, so that he awakes, on the morning of the coup, fondly believing that gold, buckets of it, lie quivering in his sky. It is he, poor man, who does the quivering afterwards!

One of the most impudent swindlers of modern times, Rinaldo K—, born at Gnezen in November 1893, troubled Europe's police forces, as Interpol's dossiers disclose, with parasitic frequency before the 1939-45 war. But, directly the Nazis overran Europe, the evil character of this man really went to town.

The most lucrative, if not the most daring, of his many perfidious accomplishments was the defrauding of a perfectly reputable Dutch bank of twenty million florins. He seized his chance, a chance such as war-time hazards alone present, of profiting by the German financial plan, then controlled by Dr. Schacht, whereby a moratorium was to be placed on Dutch assets in France. This particular bank, as Rinaldo K— shrewdly appreciated, had a glittering pool of credits provisionally frozen in Paris. His eyes glinted, no doubt, as he thought of it, and each such thought merely hardened his resolve, to win the full confidence of the Bank's directors, so that he might be entrusted to redeem those assets.

Craftier than most human jackals, he built for himself a background of financial worthiness. Forged references helped, and by dealings with other banks, he created resources, sometimes with fraudulent promissory notes of credit due to him, which enhanced his status. So when the bank he meant to trick, refusing to take things quite at their face value, put out a few discreet inquiries, each inquiry met with a satisfying testimony to his reliability and soundness as a man of finance.

Eventually, accompanied by a Colonel acquaintance of his, he saw one of the bank's directors in Paris. The director was impressed by his agile-minded familiarity with financial problems,

in particular by his understanding, seemingly based on inside knowledge of Germany's intentions, and the soundest methods of countering Dr. Schacht's manipulations. He offered, during their discussions, to redeem the bank's credits at eighty-five per cent of their true value, an offer that appealed, instantly, to the director, for other agents, or contact men, he had sounded felt that a fifty per cent return was as much as could be expected under the most favourable circumstances. Rinaldo K—, however, insisted upon his ability, thanks to his inside influence, to secure redemption at this highly agreeable figure.

So, after several consultations, the bank's directors decided that, as a preliminary, he should act as their agent, and redeem on this basis a number of their less important or less valuable investments. And that he did immediately, with smiling gratification, although to pay over the promised eighty-five per cent, he had to dip into his own pocket. Yet, this outlay was a low-priced investment set beside the golden stack he now clawed. For, as he foresaw, the bank's directors, delighted by his immediate success, thereafter charged him to redeem, with their full authority, all their banking house's remaining assets in Paris. He acted, again, with lightning promptitude, but instead of paying over what he had gained, with or without loss to himself, he began immediately to liquidate himself the liquidated monies. And such was his adroitness, the magnetism of his personality, or sheer confidence sustaining powers, that for months he kept the bank's directors in suspense, sidestepping their growing suspicions with clever promises, whereas, from the very beginning, he knew he could never meet his obligations.

This swindler's most callous side showed up when Holland, weakened by German occupation, grew steadily stronger, many patriotic Dutchmen felt, in her resolve to keep alive the spirit of resistance. The Nazis, in desperation, seized and shot hostages, not only in retaliation for some coup brought off by the patriots, but sometimes in revenge for R.A.F. bombing raids, the precision of which was due, the Germans imagined, to information transmitted by 'Spies and traitors on the home front'.

Rinaldo's crooked mind fed on news of hostages. Whenever he learned that some member of a wealthy family or of a family of undoubted influence had been taken away, he loaded his eyes with

crocodile tears and hurried off to the nearest relatives, presenting himself as a heaven-sent saviour to their stricken hearts at this period of frightening anxiety.

'You see', he emphasised convincingly, 'I am fortunate to be on good terms with certain high-ranking German officers, in fact, as it happens, the very authorities who hold van X— (here, he named the family's missing father or brother) a hostage. If you will allow me to be diplomatic in this matter, his release can, I am sure, be arranged.' His lips now pursed into their confidence-winning but snaky smile. And, a pastmaster at alternating his moods to play on the emotions of his hearers, with his own self interest inflexibly in mind, he then explained how, though ready to act as an intermediary, he could not hope to succeed without a substantial sum of money.

Men and women, already distraught by grief or anxiety, forfeit their normal powers of judgement. Few, then, reason clearly-headedly. Most clutch with frantic energy and hope to the veriest straws of any assistance that may be offered them. It was so in this case. Hardly one even doubted for an instant that a good Samaritan had providentially crossed his threshold.

The mercy mission, Rinaldo K— then promised to undertake, as soon as they declared their readiness to support him with funds, had, as he explained, to be conducted in strictest secrecy. 'Not a word', he cautioned, 'must be mentioned of my intentions. Many German officers, as you will appreciate, react most unfavourably to the mere suggestion of a bribe, and if such a man once got to hear of my intercession, my own life would not be worth that of a rat.'

Thus, several highly respectable people, having handed over large sums to him, vowed, in all earnestness, not to breathe a word to anyone about the 'dangerous favour' he was showing them. After all, when a beloved parent or relative faces the firing squad, who would not move heaven and earth, irrespective of expense, to save his life? But heaven and earth were not moved, as they thought. Sometimes Rinaldo K— came back to them, but with a highly plausible story, of how he had spoken to this German officer and to that, who had promised to do what was possible to get the particular hostage, in which they were interested, sent home. However, all this was lies. For the swindler's influence

with high-ranking German officers being absolutely nil, his self proclaimed intercessions could no more alter a hostage's fate than a puff of wind. All these unfortunate people got by trusting Rinaldo K— was relief from sums which, in some cases, they could ill spare, and an added cup of bitterness.

The wicked, however, do not flourish continually. Through his secretary, this arch swindler heard of the anxieties of a young Jewish girl, 'Tita Y—. Leaving her parents in Austria, she had come to Holland in the hope of organising aid for their rescue. As long as they remained in that country, she could not think of them without misgivings. Her very inactivity, her inability to find a useful way of spending the 4,000 florins, they had entrusted to her as rescue money must hasten, she began to feel, their removal to a concentration camp. And, when that happened, she knew she would never see them again.

She was very near to despair, when Rinaldo K— invited her to dine with him and his secretary at one of Amsterdam's most exclusive eating places. While he acted the convivial host, the girl poured out her story to him. He made light of her fears, but did so sagaciously, asking intelligent questions so that he obtained a clear view of her background, and the calibre of her parents. As she talked, vastly relieved to find a helpful person, in fact a man of great worldliness and shrewdness, she felt he was just the person, with the right international contacts, to arrange for her parents to be smuggled out of Austria into that safe neutral haven, Switzerland.

As the girl's mind toyed with this glorious possibility, the maitre d'hotel sidled up to her host, and in tones severely deferential said 'Herr Bank director X would very much like to see you; he's waiting in the hall, Sir'. 'Oh, let him wait' replied Rinaldo K— uppishly. Then, as the hotelier marched off, he turned to the girl and said, 'You see that man needs my advice, but, as you see, I do not need him.' After so fortuitous a proof of her host's standing, Tita Y— handed him, with her full trust, her 4,000 florins. The transaction left her poorer in purse, but she parted from him, feeling nearly a new being herself. Gone her sense of paralytic self ineffectiveness; she no longer saw her parents as an humiliated or martyred couple, their terrible plight caused by her own lack of initiative. She visualised them, surveying, in golden

peace, some snowlit peak, or happy valley in a country mercifully immune from war's violence and totalitarian iniquities. Within a few days now, she told herself, this splendid vision would be real.

Many days passed. Weeks went by. Still, nothing to her knowledge came of Rinaldo K—'s promised interventions. She began to pester him more and more sharply. 'I'm doing my best', he protested one day, 'but if, as I begin to think, you doubt my integrity, then ring the Foreign Minister's wife. She's staying in the hotel now, room No. 107. From her, you will soon discover how earnestly and tirelessly my skills are engaged on your family's behalf. In fact, before their rescue is possible, I shall have spent far more than the honorarium you provided me. But promises must be kept. So let me advise you, young woman, to regard my effort with respect and patience.'

The Foreign Minister's 'wife' had already been briefed. She was not the lady specified, but Rinaldo K—'s mistress at the time, a German girl. Well in the picture about this plot of his, and rehearsed in the right line to adopt, she assumed she knew exactly how to soothe the Jewish girl's fears. But somehow her assertions failed to convey the ring of truth. 'Tita Y—, the natural shrewdness of her race welling within her, put down the receiver, and cried pitiably. She felt herself duped, thoroughly duped, by as callous a trick as one human being could practise on another. Yet, while her heart beat loudly, the suspicions, firm set now in her mind, took her straight to the police. Impressed by her story, they began investigations. The scoundrel's bluff was then called. His arrest and subsequent conviction led to the discovery of an incredible series of frauds and love affairs, so stamping him, indelibly, as one of the most blackguardly international swindlers yet registered.

Most of his gains, the evidence showed, were squandered on women. His lethal charm, with its masked claws of pseudo courtesy and pseudo culture, and poise as a wealthy, uncommonly, well-informed, influential man of the world, threw them into his arms to their subsequent misery and despair. To a certain Rotraud K—, an attractive young cabaret artist, with whom he had lived for some months in America, he gave gifts of exceptional magnificence. But for all their intimate friendship, he did not completely trust her. For while such items figured in his personal

budget as 2,000 florins to furrier for Rotraud K—'s fur coat, 200 florins to jeweller for Rotraud K—'s gold ring, there was one item of 510 florins listed as payment for a private detective to shadow her.

Once the lady under suspicion had driven her yellow two-seater sport's car at more than 100 kilometres an hour from Amsterdam to The Hague. But, as she flashed over the canal bridges, roaring through the flat, beautifully tidy landscape, the detective at the wheel of his car raced after her. It was an intriguing pursuit. Whatever her business at The Hague, Rinaldo K— was determined that she should hide no secrets from him. He, alone, assumed the devil's stewardship, entitling him, and no-one else he knew, to play the deceiver's role!

Deceivers crop up in every guise. Some masquerade as priests of Buddha, or, of some religious sect, with a novel but subscription winning appeal to spiritually hungry western peoples. A bogus character appeared once, seeking for charity at various offices of the Papal Nunciature in France and Algiers. He armed himself with an introduction, forged as it turned out to be, from the Abbot of a Benedictine Monastery in Hungary, and with this letter, beautifully written in Latin, represented himself as a distressed refugee intellectual. It was his aim, he said, to settle in Australia, and take up there a scholastic post, but, unhappily, to carry out these ambitions he needed funds and support. The good-natured clerics, on whom he called, nowhere refused him money to keep his body and soul in harmony. But, by the time he reached the Archbishopric of Algiers, his misdemeanours caught up with him. To his astonishment, he found the wells of charity dry, and whatever compassion he expected had to issue now from his new hosts, the police.

Interpol set out to trace his record. The Hungarian Criminal Police, to whom his fingerprints and identity data were sent, knew nothing of him. But, ultimately, recognition came from Czechoslovakia. There, though under another name, this individual's record tallied exactly with that of a person, born at Nandek in 1925, and, very early in his career, sentenced for fraud. So, once again, a masquerader's true character, including a number of princely aliases he had assumed in his travels, was thrust into the limelight.

For several months, since the War, Interpol's resources have been taxed by a roving band of European gipsies. Their speciality in crime is an operation known as *vol au rendez-moi*. It cannot be done without clever sleight of hand. But, the gipsies, adept at it, defrauded hundreds of shop-keepers and others who, out of kindness gave them change for notes of high value. After buying an article or two, the gipsy's technique was to offer a big money note for it. He usually regretted that he had not small change. Then, when the change was given, by clever substitution, he purloined his note, took the change, and went off with whatever goods he had purchased as an additional bargain. Oddly, though this band has been broken up, police in Australia reported recently similar troubles from gipsies, trafficking through their coastal cities, and leaving behind them a trail of angry, cheated shop-keepers.

More formidable, the heavily financed gangs of international swindlers, with substitution thieving as their main line of profit, have greatly troubled National Central Bureaux since 1946. Like the gipsies, they, too, possess thoroughly slick fingers. Their sleight of hand prowess would be no disgrace to professional magicians or to the Invisible Man. Many, as Interpol recognises, are old internationals, mostly Polish-born Jews, of pre-war vintage. 'Their names were, as the saying is, 'known in Vienna'.

They work in pairs, but rarely appear twice in the same city. After pulling off a good haul in say Lisbon, the thieves change partners. The gang may next operate in Stockholm, Geneva, Cairo or Delhi. Perhaps five years elapse before the two men, responsible for the Lisbon coup, join forces afresh. Meantime, when any members of the gang run short of cash—sometimes, a very considerable outlay is needed to trap a wealthy client—the gang's 'financial committee' furnishes whatever funds are required. The six to eight men, thus teamed into an organisation, stick together very loyally. And, even when one conspirator is caught, he will seldom split on his fellows.

Each operation involves much finesse. One pair, with a jeweller's shop in Zurich as their target, first went to Amsterdam. There, strolling casually through the diamond buying and selling quarters of that famous city, they watched professional dealers at work, handling and examining stones worth thousands. Thus, through painstaking observations, they acquired the airs of professional

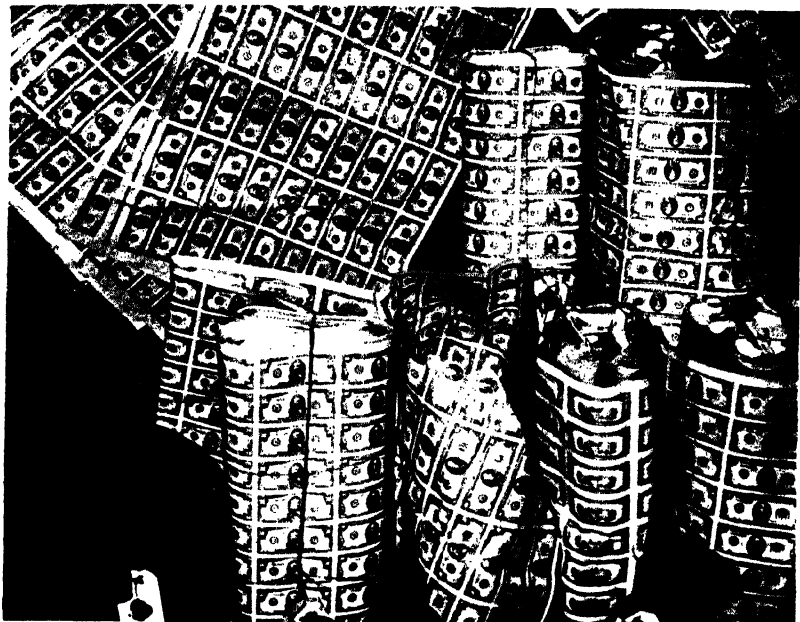


Photo by courtesy Financial Section, French Sûreté

Part of twenty million counterfeit dollars seized by the Sûreté Nationale in a Paris raid

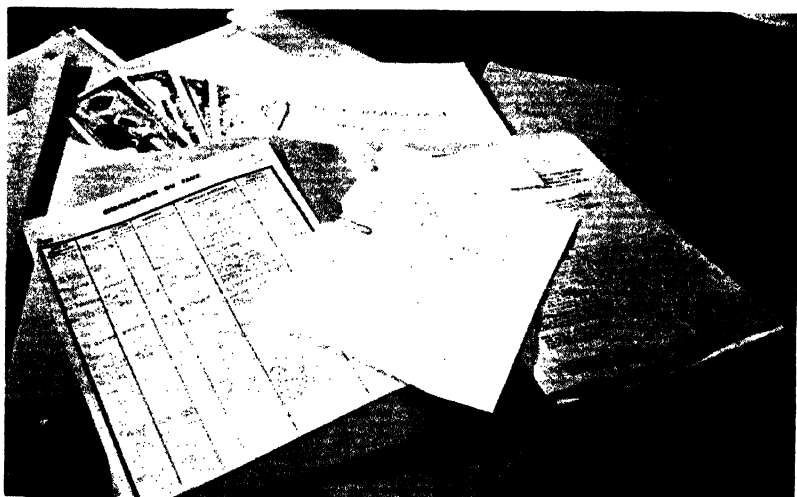


Photo by courtesy I.C.P.C

Every counterfeit haul is registered and classified



The teen-ager's hideous experiment; this girl gives herself a 'joy pop' by lightly puncturing her thigh; later, when this kind of addiction fails to satisfy, she may fall for 'main liners', injections direct into an artery



The Trafficker bo

profits from heroin by adding either white crystal iodine, amidol or milk sugar

Photos Keystone

dealers themselves. When they brought out a watch glass to scrutinise a stone, the very deliberateness of their technique suggested to anyone, who might watch it, an expertness, such as experience—long experience in honest dealing—alone confers.

Arrived in Zurich, they took rooms at a first-class hotel, from which, as a preliminary bait, they wrote to the jeweller selected for victimisation, specifying their business as jewel merchants, citing some far away firms as references, and expressing their desire for the favour of visiting him as, they understood, he had available for inspection a particularly interesting stock. Their notepaper demonstrated an impeccable taste, being not too ostentatious nor stintingly modest. The jeweller reacted, just as they expected, and after a friendly palaver, interspersed with a few nice-sounding technicalities, the two swindlers set out to make their personal selection from jewels and watches he thought would please them.

Conversation then set the trap.

First trickster. 'Well, we've picked out these stones and watches and would like to discuss their purchase. Perhaps you'd kindly work out the cost.'

'29,175 Swiss francs.'

'Good, perhaps you'd put these items into an envelope and keep them for us, because we don't think we can take them away immediately, or, finally, settle on buying them. You see, we haven't that amount in Swiss francs, but we could, if agreeable to you, offer you the equivalent sum in U.S. dollar bills.'

The jeweller paused. Something ticked over in his mind about counterfeit dollars. Being a smart fellow, he was not going to fall for a hoary deception like that.

'You must appreciate gentlemen that you are both strangers to me. We have not been privileged to deal together beforehand. So you will not be offended, I am sure, if first I ask a colleague at my bank to see if it is possible to accept this American money of yours.'

Second trickster. 'This is hardly the trust we normally receive. However, if you feel at all doubtful, we are, of course, perfectly willing for a bank official or any friend of yours to examine our money.'

'Of course, gentlemen, you will come with me.' Off trot all

three, and the bank cashier, a man whose judgement in these matters is absolutely sound, pronounces the dollar notes to be genuine. They return to the shop.

'Well, since our money has been proved satisfactory,' smiles the leading rogue, 'I still feel we'd like to delay just for a few hours our final selection from the stock set aside for us. We will let you have the dollars as a guarantee of our good faith. And, perhaps in return, you could allow us to take away the selected stock to our hotel. There, at our leisure, we can study each article intimately, and in the morning we shall be happy to clinch the deal with you, say at 10 a.m.

'Certainly, gentlemen.' The jeweller feels he has behaved rather badly in suspecting a wad of perfectly genuine dollars. Besides, the transaction, if carried through, is a profitable one for him, and with the dollars in his safe keeping, he has nothing to lose. He watches the first trickster count out dollar bills to the appropriate value, put them into an envelope, seal it, and hand the envelope to him. He in turn brings out the envelope containing their selection, and, with an amiable smile, he shakes the hands of his two wealthy customers and sees them off his premises, after reiterating his pleasure at renewing their acquaintance in the morning. Ostensibly, they leave for their hotel, but their real goal is Zurich airport. Within an hour, they may be flying to Brussels, Paris, or even Bombay.

Next day, after ten o'clock has struck, without sign of their return, the jeweller begins to feel a trifle restless. Just as a precaution, he decides to look at his envelope primed with dollars again. At least the presence of those bills is reassuring. But, alas for his expectations. When he tears open the envelope, it is not dollars he finds stuffed within it, but a mere, uncompromising, agonisingly plain wad of brown paper!

Often it is a minor infringement which draws Interpol's notice to an international swindler, whose crookedness has fleeced men and women in half a dozen different countries. One man played a fairly common trick on a well-known restaurant in the Champs-Élysées. Dining with a girl friend there—this swindler lived at the rate of 200-300,000 French francs a week and was always accompanied by smartly dressed girls—he claimed, after paying his bill, that someone had walked off with his overcoat. To avoid

a scene, the manager reimbursed him for the loss in his private office. But something in the customer's face caused him to doubt the man's bona fides. So, he reported the incident to the Paris Prefecture. The inquiries, so started, shifted to the International Bureau.

Thus, through a queer, but not unusual lapse in psychology, the I.B. got on the track of a man, wanted by the Spanish N.C.B., for swindling an actress in Madrid of 150,000 pesetas, wanted by the Italian N.C.B. for defrauding a Luxembourger in Venice of 95,000 Belgian francs, and nine times condemned by courts, in his native Czechoslovakia, before 1939, on charges of theft, forgery and false pretences. When, through Interpol's circulations, he was arrested in Genoa, he was living in his usual sumptuous style, occupying a suite at a first-class hotel, driving an opulent-looking car, with an equally opulent-looking girl friend beside him. He swindled in millions, yet it was a paltry overcoat, or the lack of one, that betrayed him.

The value of the International Bureau's dossiers, as a counter to international crooks, was never more classically demonstrated than in the case of Shalom Gitler. Such a gentleman, bearing this name, an alias, was reported by the Israeli N.C.B. at Tel Aviv. The local police caught him, on a housebreaking job, but what interested them was his unusual burglar's kit. The tools, it contained, had not been seen before in Israel. They suggested a most seasoned practitioner. So, because of this, the local N.C.B. forwarded his fingerprints, portrait parlé, and photograph to the I.B.

The name Shalom Gitler rang no bell. But judge the dossier specialist's expression of satisfaction when, on searching through his files, he found that the so-called Shalom Gitler was none other than a notorious European jewel thief, whose greatest coup, two years earlier, on November 30th, 1947, had been the ransacking of a jeweller's shop in Neuchâtel, Switzerland, from which he and his gang had taken jewellery and watches worth 350,000 Swiss francs. The rest of the gang had been caught, but he had vanished completely. So now, instead of being held on a local charge, and perhaps treated as a first offender, the extradition of the falsely named Shalom Gitler became highly desirable in the interests of international justice. The burglar, Gitler, suffered soon after-

wards, it is safe to presume, a very sleepless night in his cell in Tel Aviv. Perhaps, he wondered precisely what angel of retribution had marked him down.

For deceivers, as for all other criminals, or racketeers of whatever description, the French artist, Pierre Prud'hon underlined a lesson of his day, with his strongly emotional nocturnal study of 'La Justice et La Vengeance Divine poursuivant le Crime'. This bold, dramatic painting, a treasure in the Louvre, depicts a swarthy visaged murderer, his booty clutched to his breast, in the act of running away from his victim, whose body lies prone and naked white on the ground behind him. His furtive backward glance is unavailing. For, as the moonlight radiating the dark deed discloses, two avenging deities, one with her sword drawn and the other lighting the track of the escaping assassin with her flaring torch, fly through the heavens in pursuit.

To-day, Interpol furnishes the torch, concentrating the forces of law, irrespective of nation or geographical situation, on each fugitive. It is a torch, whose strongest illumination derives from coldly housed, but meticulously accurate records, the records of the files, which attest to the wanted man's identity and with it his peculiarities, his habits and his misdeeds. And, though deceivers throw up, from time to time, the very devil's disciples in cunning, callousness and expensively calculated chicanery, soon or late, Interpol's arm of search will, by the laws of modern science and the co-operation of modern states, expose them to its relentless spotlight.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE FIGHT AGAINST COUNTERFEITERS

Millions made to Order

OPERATION 'Counterfeit' calls for exceptional planning skill, much delicate copy work by criminal technicians, and an outlay for printing presses, costing often heavy sums in genuine money before H-hour looms up—the hour when notes begin to run in 'golden' streams of intrinsic rubbish off the illicit or illicitly used presses. It is fortunate that such preliminaries are unavoidable. The conspirators must meet, therefore, many times before ever their plot materialises, and every time they meet, someone has a chance of eavesdropping.

They may be caught in other ways. Back in September 1951, for instance, the police in Addis Ababa pulled up a prosperous-looking Italian citizen named Ricardo P—. They suspected him of uttering fraudulent Ethiopian dollars, and when they searched him, his car and his dwelling, the grand total of 15,000 Ethiopian dollars, made up of cunningly forged notes, was recovered. At once, the Ethiopian police forwarded news of this discovery, and basic information about the culprit to the International Bureau in Paris. Whereupon the General Secretariat, since the offender was of Italian blood, promptly passed on the information to Rome.

Here, the authorities dallied not at all in probing into Ricardo P—'s background. They located and shadowed his cronies, practised counterfeiters all, and not inactive. Indeed, thanks to the I.B.'s intervention, the arrest of Ricardo P— amid broiling sun in faraway Addis Ababa, enabled them to trace and smash a danger-

ous ring of professional typographers and printers, whose African sales agent he was. And like most counterfeiting gangs, this organisation did not restrict its money-faking to Ethiopian dollars or, to the more popular, universally coveted, U.S. dollar bills.

Counterfeiting gangs recruit their strength from habitual criminals. 'Theirs is no game for amateurs, incompetent organisers or free-lance swindlers. As a rule, their composition is thoroughly representative of international criminality at its worst. Men as notorious, or with records equally odious, are met with only among drug traffickers.

Of their mischief's range, a recital of some recent activities will suffice. Fraudulent 20 franc Swiss notes, allegedly manufactured in Paris, circulated a short time back in Switzerland, their distributors being Belgians. A Finnish gang, operating in Helsinki, sent its products, forged Swedish 100 crown notes and 5 U.S. dollar bills, to Northern Finland, believing that there money was more gladly received than examined. Their agent, a brother of one conspirator, succeeded also in passing off several of these notes on the Swedish side of the frontier. Moreover, since the war, Western Europe, to the embarrassment of practically every country in it, even the very tiniest independent states, has suffered from inundations of counterfeit U.S. dollars. In Austria a thriving clandestine trade developed until police action snuffed it out in counterfeit U.S. military script notes, as well as in counterfeit 20, 50 and 100 U.S. dollar bills. Similar operations were floated in Western Germany.

Few currencies in circulation to-day are beyond the counterfeiter's skills, and his switches from one country's paper to another's are often as artfully designed as his notes. In Brazil, for instance, a Japanese ring was discovered, at whose clandestine shop, cruzeiros were being run off. Then, in the Netherlands West Indies, another criminal organisation got busy, but was fortunately interrupted just when planning to flood black market bourses in South America with fake 50 Columbia peso notes.

Each year, since its post war resumption, Interpol has registered a steady rise in counterfeiting operations. In 1951, police forces of member states broke up 25 illicit counterfeiting shops, but in 1952, police officers in these countries tackled 582 cases of counterfeiting as opposed to 394 in '51. And, concurrently, the suppress-

sion of this evil forms a substantial proportion of the International Bureau's day-to-day activity, while the anti-counterfeiting section at The Hague is, of course, fully preoccupied by it.

To focus the attention of national police forces on this menace, as well as to drive home some important points, helpful to investigators, the General Secretariat has sponsored the production of its first film, entitled 'False Money and Its Repression'. The lessons it emphasises must be heeded, for, as the film aptly illustrates, counterfeiting, like drug trafficking, wherever it crops up hatches a threat nearly universal in dimensions. And countries at all backward in their search for and destruction of clandestine printing 'dens' forge a fierce rod, belabouring the economies of member nations, and capable of arousing ire and indignation even from institutions so well founded, decorous, well-mannered and conservative in outlook as the Bank of England or U.S. Treasury Department, Washington!

'Catch the counterfeiters red-handed.' That cry, in effect, challenges investigating police officers and detectives. Unless they can raid the gang's secret premises while printing is actually in process, so grabbing both the conspirators and the proofs of their conspiracy, it is extremely hard to get evidence strong enough to break up a gang. And, the most effective means of breaking up such gangsters is to tuck them away in prison, preferably for long terms. But, in some Continental countries, where counterfeiting is rife, the sentences imposed even on hardened recidivists seem merely to whet their appetite for fresh operations directly they are released.

However, in 1953, the Financial Section of the French Sûreté Nationale's criminal police put a stop to two dangerous counterfeiting gangs, in each case intercepting the gang beside its thudding presses. Such triumphs, almost copybook in their approach to this vexatious problem, were not achieved without the constant shadowing of suspects, the recording of their conversations, and thousands of tedious hours passed by detectives, hidden or disguised, watching their movements, often without gaining a solitary clue. But in the end, this monumental patience evolved into two perfectly timed raids.

The three members of the Clichy gang, to whom the Section first gave attention in March 1953, all had criminal records. Their

leader, born at Nancy in 1907, was in trouble in Paris in 1947 when, convicted of an attempt to utter 40,000 counterfeit U.S. dollars, he was fined 116 million French francs, and sentenced to 18 months imprisonment. On the 5th March, detectives began to shadow him and his two associates, a task made easier by the consistent habits that characterised these crooks.

Consistency of habit, strangely enough, is a human failing few even of the cleverest internationals ever avoid. All men crave, at times, for illusion and diversion, also for their own vanity-worship. These cravings, too, are perhaps less readily left unsatisfied by crooks than by honest beings. So, by adherence to the ancient, yet unageing principle of 'cherchez la femme', the detectives sat themselves in the very café where these crooks met regularly, wining, dining and talking with their girl friends, utterly unsuspecting that vigilant ears, close by, were gathering the full text of their conversations. And over a period, it is astonishing how indiscreet, even men, whose interests are best served by absolute secrecy, can be. But, though the plans of the three seemed to be ripening daily, by mid-April their meetings suddenly ceased, and the shadowers were withdrawn.

Shortly afterwards, however, the Financial Section gained a tip-off from another source, through which the backer of this three-man enterprise was named. 'Le Nicois', as he was called, had apparently provided them with 2,500,000 francs capital. With that money, they were now negotiating, the informer said, for purchase of a printing machine. So back went the shadowers to their elusive task.

Fresh conversations in the café yielded vital information, best summarised as (a) the location of the printing works, at which the three confederates proposed to operate, and (b) the purchase and delivery date of a new lithographic machine. Furthermore, through repeated indiscretions at the bar, the detectives learned of their plans to start their major operation, the printing of several thousand 50 dollar U.S. bills, in the month of September.

Actually, within a six week period, members of this gang paid over 100 visits to the same café in Clichy—remarkable proof of their loyalty to one spot, lack of imagination as plotters, or, more likely, their vain belief in their own immunity from observation. So, as was to be expected, the very date, at which they schemed

to launch operations leaked out. Again, long before an official visit became due, the police knew that the printing shop, ostensibly a legitimate one, where these rascals set up ink and paper, had an office and ground floor printing works, with the equipment and use of which no one could find fault. But, in the basement, well beyond the eyesight of chance visitors, was the real works, the illicit shop!

At an appropriate hour, detectives walked straight into the premises. An employee, in the ground floor offices, called out to his cronies, and then, asking his visitors to wait, ran off to fetch them. The officers followed at his heel, stepping straight into the basement where, hardly to their surprise, two of the conspirators stood guiltily beside their lithographic machine, surrounded by lithographic blocks, and some 7,000 printed sheets, each containing three fifty dollar bills. They were arrested instantly, their ringleader soon afterwards, and thus by opportunist police work, a conspiracy that had already counterfeited notes exceeding a million dollars in face value was nipped in the bud.

The craftsmanship shown by these crooks was of a high order. In fact, such is the widespread practical knowledge of modern printing processes, that the counterfeiter's handiwork, as proved by many notable examples, almost works of art in themselves, tends to improve steadily, puzzling sometimes even experts by its accuracy—as well it might! For one notorious gang, with ambitions of dizzy wealth, had the effrontery to raid the State Bank of France, steal several reams (the French ream differs from the English in sheet content, containing twenty quires of twenty-five sheets) of the Bank's specially processed 1,000 franc paper, and then use this booty as the basis for its self-manufactured 1,000 franc notes!

However, in the Clichy case, the gang's technical expert, as he explained after his arrest, first stripped a 50 dollar note in two, using special liquids to do it, and then studied minutely its structure. With the two halves, or front separated from the back, he gained, he said, a useful insight into the arrangements of the red and green filaments, distinguishing each side, and it was his ambition to reproduce faithfully that peculiar colouring pattern. Had his plans worked, his notes would, no doubt, have caused much embarrassment. Instead, it was his reward to bear the

embarrassment, brought about by his operation 'Counterfeit', in prison.

No longer, indeed, because of the technical excellence attained by crooked zinc block makers, engravers and photographers may one claim, without fear of contradiction, that only the ink on a genuine American dollar refuses to run dry. Neither would it be safe to assume that the goldenish tinge, characteristic of a Bank of England £1 note's watermark, defies imitation. But, as a rule, fraudulent notes, whatever the currency represented, give themselves away by the feel of their paper, the lack of some familiar, perhaps indefinable quality commonplace in the genuine article. Very few persons, however acute their powers of observation, ever glance sufficiently closely at their £1 notes to spot anything but arrant flaws in design, certainly not the little imperfections, the false twirls, scrolls and squiggles, perhaps some faintness or topsy-turviness in lettering that betrays the counterfeit to the trained analyst.

Now and again, of course, a man crouched over a desk or chest of drawers, in some ill-ventilated attic, may counterfeit a note, giving his subject that same sort of loving devotion to detail, such as an artist summons forth when he copies a Titian, a David, a Delacroix or a Reynolds. And, such a man, usually a crank, invariably lavishes what skills he commands on a note of high value, the very highest often in its currency. He thus makes certain that even if his counterfeit is near perfect, his disposal of his masterpiece at anything like its face value bristles with difficulties. Having spent six months or more of diligent homework on a single note, he may well feel he is entitled legitimately to seek some reward. But cranks, as a rule, pay heavily for their idiosyncracies. It is their misfortune. Gangsters, on the other hand, engineering palatial schemes for self enrichment, often get off with light punishment.

The unmasking of the counterfeit shop in the Rue Raymond-Losserand, Montparnasse, again emphasised how swift action in these cases is possible only if preceded by most careful, laborious, and slow-rewarding reconnaissance. Here, also, detectives first had their suspicions aroused by knowledge that men, known for their counterfeiting activities, were meeting at particular cafés. At one of their meeting places, the café proprietor himself, the

police discovered, owned a printing business, and was talked into an illicit partnership.

But some time elapsed, after the identification of each suspect, before the detectives, through a causal word dropped over a café telephone conversation, learned the whereabouts of the gang's 'den'. After that, it was mere routine to organise a raid.

Then, unobtrusively one morning at 7 a.m., just as the rubbish carts were gathering up Paris's ill-stored garbage, police officers in mufti slipped into well-reconnoitred vantage posts that overlooked an obscure, back street printing works. While they waited, watching, crouching, aching at times with cramp, the principal conspirators assembled. Then, four hours later, though nearly blue now with cold, the chief inspector, being nearest to the works, at long last heard the incriminating click and rhythmic staccato of printing presses in full cry.

In accordance with pre-arranged tactics, he now crept forward, and with unfaltering aim, tossed a brick straight through a frosted outside window of their shop. It was his close in signal.

As his men darted forward, he peered through the broken glass. What he saw was gratifying. As his face hovered momentarily before the aperture, his quarry, three notorious counterfeiters recoiled like scalded cats from their offset machine, the base of which was smothered with masses of uncut notes. 'Police,' yelled one, unnerved by the stern stare from the window gap. All three bolted. They need not have hurried. For, in stampeding towards their main exit, they merely hurled themselves, one after the other, into the strong grip of the waiting gendarmerie.

Thus ended, for a period at least, their counterfeiting of prodigious quantities of 20 Deutschmark notes. From their printing press's outgoing frame, the police screened off a 10 lb. pile of green tinted sheets. Except for the cutting operation, this hoard was ready for disposal in Western Germany's fake money markets. The ingoing frame carried twice that weight of sheets but impressed on one face only with the Deutschmark engraving. This clever gang, like others of international notoriety, conspired, too, to spread its risks by floating forged note circulations in several other national currencies, none of them French.

It was soon learned through interrogation and on the spot investigation that the gang had, at different periods, counterfeited

and marketed large totals of 100 and 5 German Deutschemark notes, 100 Spanish peseta notes, 1,000 Belgian franc notes, and 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 U.S. dollar bills. Except for the owner of the printing works, an accomplice since he, knowingly, permitted the gang to use his machinery, and the photo-engraver, a newcomer to crime, all the chief actors in this operation were old hands. One first underwent sentence back in 1929. Drug trafficking was the charge against him. Subsequently, he had been convicted for swindling offences, trafficking in ration cards, and a breach of trust affair. Yet, so little had punishment altered or daunted him that inquiry, in this case, showed him to be the gang's chief financial backer, a backing effected in real currency!

Immediately after raids of this description, Continental police investigate the gang's women-folk. Girl friends, consequently, are deprived of the opportunity to lie low for a while or live softly on forged 'rewards' until their masters, free of prison, can prepare some fresh mischief. They, too, are liable to be bankrupted suddenly, their fineries whisked away, themselves thrust into prison garb, and reduced to an unglamorous existence behind bars.

The rue Raymond-Losserand dénouement caused one counterfeiter's girl friend, at least, to rail against high heaven or whatever power, she believed, should feather and abet her petted life. Barely had she settled down to sleep in her apartment at Beauvais—a soft carpeted, expensive and choicely scented snuggerly—when police knocked, and scarcely allowing her time to slip on her dressing-gown, entered.

'You've counterfeit notes here, we believe', said the inspector.

'Non, non.' The girl's archly hunched shoulders, the flicker of her eyelids, and the very cast of her lips, convinced at once those experienced policemen that she was lying. And, within half a minute, their search demonstrated the stupidity of her denials.

From beneath the bed, they pulled out a stout, much-travelled trunk which, as soon as the lid was raised, revealed itself as a counterfeiter's mobile bank. From it they recovered 43,000 counterfeit U.S. dollars in 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 dollar bills, and ten counterfeit Belgian 1,000 franc notes. And, what was equally interesting, beneath this pile of meretricious but dangerous paper, they found a full set of equipment for forging passports.

Wearily the girl then sat down on her bed with the comment,

'I suppose you've discovered enough. So, perhaps, I can sleep again, undisturbed.'

'In the cells, without doubt. Dress, Mademoiselle, if you please. We must search your bed.' How unchivalrous policemen sometimes are! But, these precautions yielded their best discovery—her boy friend's account book.

Being a methodical fellow but foolishly incautious, he had entered up his recent sales, specifying in neat handwriting—his columns would not have disgraced a chartered accountant—the amounts and currencies disposed of, together with their totals. These were impressive, 600,000 counterfeit U.S. dollars and 450,000 counterfeit Belgian francs. He described himself as a commercial traveller which, in effect, he was, but instead of dealing in legitimate goods, he operated solely in fictitious notes. And, most conveniently for interested police officers in Belgium and Western Germany, he had recorded in his little notebook the names and addresses of several customers, on whom he called regularly whenever 'in funds'.

The sales or distribution side of counterfeit currencies repays study. Seldom do agents or bogus commercial travellers, such as this crook and his mistress, know the gang responsible for manufacturing the notes. Some of its counterfeits, the gang realises, will be detected almost directly they are uttered. Such secrecy, therefore, is their security against squealers.

Originally, too, notes may be sold to trusted distributors for as little as 15 per cent of their face value, but as the distributors redistribute, the price rises all the time, narrowing the gap between the note's fake and face values. If police officers catch a criminal with a batch of fraudulent money, for which he is asking 50 per cent or more of its allegedly true value, they know that several intermediaries must stand between him and the counterfeiting organisation. In other words, the ratio of a false note's black market price to its face value can be an accurate guide to the seller's place in the chain of distribution, his nearness or otherwise to the illicit 'shop'.

Lastly, the case of an Argentinian, Nicasio P—, who formerly headed a counterfeiting gang in Buenos Aires, illustrates not only Interpol's power of long-range interceptions but the counterfeiter's equally extensive range of operation. In his native city,

helped by accomplices, highly skilled, technically, he organised an output of ingeniously impressed, but far from flawless, counterfeit 100 U.S. dollar bills. Fingering these gang-made rolls, he must have felt an itch to spend. And Europe, with her civilised pleasures, beckoned him irresistibly. So, with his wallets well laden, he flew first to Paris and, no doubt, visions of costly gaieties, but gaieties well within his compass, travelled with him.

Yet, fast as he flew, intelligence about his plans preceded him. Not only that, but samples of his faked bills, seized in the Argentine, were forwarded to Interpol's anti-counterfeiting section at The Hague. There, the bills were analysed, and banks and police forces warned accordingly of exactly the type of note Nicasio P—would in all probability attempt to foist on them.

Soon enough, the 'self-made' millionaire's travels in Europe began to attract official interest. First in Brussels, then in Rome, utterances of these unmistakable notes were reported. Did the South American counterfeiting 'king' only grasp it, he was sowing a paper trail behind him as distinctively as a schoolboy scattering scraps in a paper chase. And, inevitably, the watchdogs of the law stepped right into his track.

Just as he stood, one Saturday midday—always a favourite time with fraudsmen for passing bad money—before the grille in a Parisian bank, changing his dollars into francs, the cashier politely asked him to wait a moment. Suspecting nothing, Nicasio P—was surprised when, after a very brief wait, two police inspectors from the Sûreté walked up to him, and escorted him to the local station. There, he was stripped and searched and, as the police took from him a wad of un-uttered counterfeits, his grandiose European holiday erupted into mocking little pieces under his feet. His immediate future embraced no more generous horizon than a stuffy cell in a French prison. And there, he was fated to rest, a much chagrined gangster, while extradition proceedings underwent their normal course.

CHAPTER SIX

DRUG TRAFFICKERS NEGLECT NO EVIL

*And who are the greater criminals—those who
sell the instruments of death or those who buy
and use them?*

ROBERT E. SHERWOOD, *Idiot's Delight*

THE representatives of three nations, Greece, Turkey and Yugoslavia, tabled a resolution of significance to Interpol at the Ninth Session of the United Nations' Narcotics Commission, held from April 19th to May 14th, 1954. The resolution carried by 13 votes with two countries (Poland and the U.S.S.R.) abstaining, none opposing, and specially recommended for adoption by U.N.'s Social and Economic Council was:

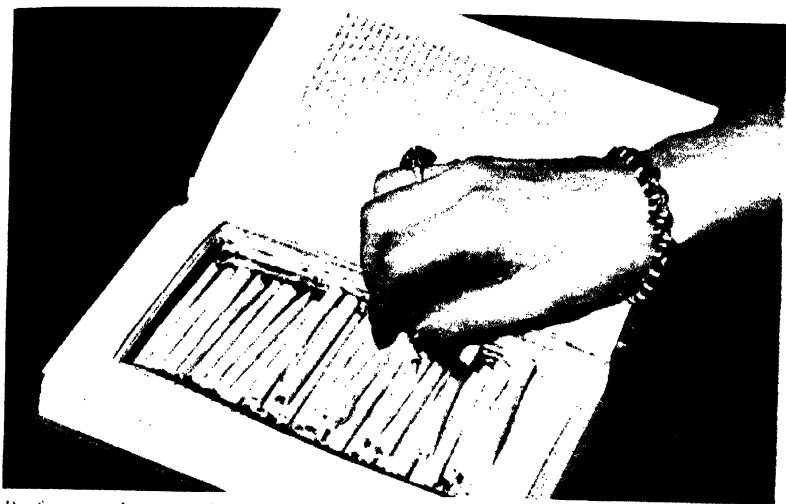
'The Narcotics Committee notes that the magnitude of the illicit drug traffic is still disquieting. Considers that owing to the international aspect of this traffic, close international collaboration should be established for the purpose of effectively opposing it. Requests governments to co-ordinate their efforts in this field by making use of all existing means. Directs their attention in this connection to the work of the International Criminal Police Commission which, by the immediate circulation and use of the information at its disposal, is in a position to provide help in the suppression of this illicit traffic. Requests governments to provide this organisation with as little delay as possible any information relative to persons implicated in cases of illicit drug traffic which might be of international interest.'

Gratifying, however, as is the United Nations' recognition and support, stressed also in former years, of Interpol as a combative

force against the international drug trafficker, this gratification can never be more than partially fulfilled so long as certain states, members of the Commission, withhold the co-operation they might so readily give in a united fight against this evil. No international crime to-day is less centralised in menace or, conversely, so far ranging in its fields of exploitation.

Some countries, not to be accused of ignorance or lack of authoritative information about narcotics trafficking, hardly encourage their legislators or police forces to get to grips with the problem at all. Crops of drug yielding plants, notably opium and Indian hemp, are grown without supervision on their terrain. International gangs draw heavily, therefore, off their merchants for supplies. And, in other countries, notably Italy, which should in view of Rome's past glories, set an example to civilised nations, firms licensed to use drugs for medicinal preparations, even when known to have abused their licenses, and diverted supplies to black marketeers and pedlars, are allowed, in some flagrant cases, to continue in business. Because of such slackness in control, a slackness still evident despite the campaigning efforts of the Permanent Central Opium Board and repeated warnings of U.N.'s Narcotics Commission, thousands of human beings are exposed to-day to utter destruction of their moral fibres. As addicts, they soon forfeit their decency as human beings, though never their right to humanity's graces, but driven to insanity or demoralisation of their personalities which is, at best, a ghastly reflection of their real selves, many can look forward only to death as a providential, cleansing release.

In 1953, Interpol's General Secretariat recorded on information forthcoming from 27 of its member states and territories, a total of 319 cases of international drug trafficking. France reported the largest number of such cases, 118 in all, a figure which contrasts with 38 cases in Algeria, 23 in the United States, 22 in Italy, 19 in Western Germany, 10 in Israel and, at the bottom end of the scale, 5 in Canada, and 2 each in Japan and the United Kingdom. No-one must believe that the whole incidence of international drug trafficking is thus exposed, or even, perhaps, a sizeable fraction of its activities. However, as counterstrokes, the International Bureau issued, during the year, 33 international circulars of notorious traffickers, circulars which contained their police



Reefers, marihuana packed cigarettes, distributed through the subterfuge of a false book



Customs Officers conduct a spot check on the quayside; they search as carefully for black market gold as for undeclared drugs, nylons, jewels, perfumes or banknotes



The primitive coffin containing the 'body' of an international life assurance swindler after exhumation in a Rumanian cemetery



Photos by courtesy Belgian Ministry of Justice

The sack, used as substitute-corpse by the criminal, was filled with black soil

identity photographs, ten fingerprints, details of their *modus operandi*, their accomplices and a summary of their criminal ventures.

Also circulated was a list of ships, 29 in all (11 French vessels and 7 of United Kingdom registration included), used for transporting drugs, and two lists of seamen suspected as traffickers.

By analysing its statistics of drug-trafficking arrests, the I.B. arrived at some disturbing facts. For instance, 51 cases of opium smuggling resulted in the arrest of 101 persons, of whom 40 were Chinese and 26 of French nationality (2 Arabs). And, of the total weight of opium seized, 459.4 kg, the origin of 439.10 kg, or 95.5%, was traced. Predominant as the main supplier was Lebanon, responsible for 274.53 kgs or 62.5% of the total seizures; next came Kuwait with 48.20 kgs or 11.0%, followed by Turkey with 36.44 kg or 8.2%, India with 30.75 kg or 7.0% and then Germany (ex-Wehrmacht supplies) with 4.26 kg or 1.0%.

For morphine trafficking, with its operations centred in Western Europe, Lebanon, again, according to the I.B.'s analysis, had the invidious distinction of serving as the main supply source. The routes, favoured by traffickers, resolved into (a) Iran-Egypt-Italy-France and (b) Lebanon-Italy-France-U.S.A. Of the 81 people arrested, and 61,978 g of drugs seized, 19 Italians, 17 Germans and 16 French citizens were counted, and 82.2% of their illicit goods originated from Lebanon. Then of the diacetylmorphine traffic, France provided 30,376 g or 62.50% of the amount seized and Lebanon 14,800 g or 30.50%, and the total arrests, 132 in 37 cases, included 60 Frenchmen (7 Arabs), 26 Japanese and 14 Tunisians. Cannabis, marihuana or Indian hemp furnishes special problems of its own. Since Western European nations, as a post-war economy, started giving employment to North African workers, those same nations, notably France and Belgium, have had to cope with the form of drug addiction most craved for by Algerians and their neighbours. The craving, too, has broken out, as a new form of criminal activity, in Western Germany, owing to garrisons of North American negroes quartered there. Seizures, in this category, amounted to 2534.84 kg, of which 98.7% was traced to its source of origin. Algeria produced 1878.33 kg or 75.5%, France 422.00 kg or 16.7%. And, of the 184 persons arrested in 86 police actions, there were 121 French (112 Arabs),

11 Tunisians, 6 Israelis (1 Jewish woman and 5 Arabs) and 2 British. Lastly, as suppliers of cocaine and pharmaceutical products for illegal purposes, Italy was rated the main source of cocaine, Milan being a centre of the traffic, but so far, Italian complicity in the misappropriation of medical substances, containing drugs, is perhaps better left to charity or to its own Government's conscience than to a mere factual recital.

No appreciation of the scale of international drug trafficking to-day, however, is possible without some insight into America's problem. For the United States is, unenviably, the target No. 1 for the world's illicit narcotics dealers, since it offers traffickers, whether criminal drug importation syndicates or mere petty pedlars, the highest rewards for their dope and the widest market for its distribution. Reliable estimates put the number of addicts, concurrently in the United States, at 60,000; but alarm is rightly felt by increasing proof of addiction among teen-agers, eighty-five per cent being negroes. Even fourteen-year-old schoolboys and schoolgirls, possibly out of dare-devilry or through sheer hoodlumism, are killing themselves or driving themselves insane by their self-administered injections of heroin 'joy shots'. At the United States Public Health Service Hospital at Lexington, Kentucky, eighteen per cent of those undergoing cure for drug addiction in 1953, were under 21, whereas, in 1946, merely three per cent of the hospital's drug patients were youngsters in that sense.

The Treasury Department's Bureau of Narcotics at Washington, apart from its lively preventative work in checking illegal imports and bringing violators to book, aspires to secure stricter legislative measures, in some states, so that penalties for drug trafficking are, to say the least, discouraging. A minimum 5 year term of imprisonment is proposed, with 10 years as a maximum; and if such measures were enforced everywhere, the Bureau of Narcotics would be largely free of recidivist operators, men, who put away perhaps for 18 months, resume their illicit trade immediately after release from prison.

While in some states—New Jersey is an example—narcotics control is strict and vigorously enforced, with adequate legislation and an efficient inspectorate in the background, other states, slack in their enforcement measures, present the trafficker with

precisely the opportunities he needs to ply his devilish trade, and infiltrate supplies to centres, mostly big cities, where addict 'clubs' abound.

Notwithstanding such internal weaknesses, or loopholes, favourable to exploiters, America's basic drug problem is of external origin—the incessant bombardment of her shores and fiscal barriers with illicit supplies, from the ends of the earth, but chiefly from China. No-one among her protagonists against this evil stands higher in his country's esteem than the Honourable H. J. Anslinger, Commissioner of Narcotics, Bureau of Narcotics, Washington. And no-one, since he was first appointed U.S. Commissioner in 1930, has exerted brain and energy more doughtily to mobilise world resources, both in terms of law and police or custom's surveillance, to clear the whole, vast, complicated and shuddering canker of illicit drug dealing from the earth. Progress has been gained, and Mr. Anslinger, deservedly, ranks as a pioneer of it. Humanity owes him much and could, if some of its administrators were less lethargic or indifferent, owe him more.

From the outset, he tackled the problem internationally. And to-day, the evil's main striking force, as he sees it, is a political weapon, nothing less than Communist China's aim to supply the United States with 'a flood of foreign-exchange earning, health and moral devastating heroin'. 'Narcotic trafficking from the Chinese mainland,' as he said at the Ninth Session of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs 'is an insidious, calculated scheme of the Chinese Communist régime to obtain operating funds and at the same time spread the debauchery of narcotic addiction among free nations.'

During 1953 Chinese exports of opium, morphine and heroin reached, according to Mr. Anslinger's information, a total of 800 tons. And that figure fell twenty per cent short of the goal set by Jung Tzu Ho, the Minister of Finance, to his special henchmen, Yeh Li Chuang, Minister of Trade, and Fang Jung Ho, Chief of Special Trade, an euphemism for narcotics. At legitimate prices, that export, sufficient to meet more than the world's medical needs for a twelvemonth, was worth 60 million U.S. dollars. No-one knows the earning power of illicit supplies milked from this prodigious bulk. One can only attempt to assess its evil after close study of first-hand reports into Chinese inspired illegal drug

rings operating in Japan, throughout the Far East, but especially in Malaya and Thailand, and in the United States.

After months of undercover investigation, U.S. Narcotics Law Enforcement agents in San Francisco, California, traced a big dope-distributing conspiracy, the central figure behind which was a dealer called Judah Isaac Ezra of Hong Kong. Heroin obtained from Communist China was transmitted, through his craft, to cafés and bars, both cheap and expensive sorts, on America's West Coast.

According to Mr. Anslinger's evidence 'Merchant seamen who frequented Ezra's establishment obtained heroin from him and smuggled it into the United States for the illicit market. In most instances the heroin was brought into the country concealed on the persons of seamen. Ornately carved camphorwood chests with specially built compartments were also used for several of the smuggling operations.

'One of the dealers arrested in San Francisco operated a florist's shop and made his deliveries of heroin disguised as boxes of flowers. Other dealers made deliveries to under-cover agents in Chinese restaurants and meeting-places for seamen. Arrangements for sales of heroin were often negotiated over the most elaborate Chinese dinners.

'Chinese social clubs were frequently the meeting-places to arrange for sales and delivery of the narcotics. One such social club is known to the authorities as a gathering-place for Communist Chinese and Chinese alien smugglers.'

Altogether, this round-up secured 6 lb. of heroin. Unseized, that quantity contained poison enough to give addicts over 1,000,000 hell shots.

Chinese traffickers, scrupulously schooled in their selling techniques invite all comers, ignoring the forfeits in fear and agony which must follow, to 'Chase the Dragon' or to 'Shoot A.A. Guns', expressions reflective of their own terms for heroin 'dreams'. But well aware of the drug's utter corruptibility, the men controlling these traffickers, sternly forbid them to use the drug themselves. Traffickers, if they become addicts, are eliminated. It is an efficient, calculated business. And few traffickers ever know or discover, if foolhardy enough to seek to do so, the identity of big suppliers. Once a small group of Chinese pedlars,

relatively unimportant agents, did betray their agent at base. Their cars were lopped off as punishment.

Suppressing this monstrous evil, as the U.S. Bureau of Narcotics so plainly recognises, demands world-wide strategy. It is Interpol's duty, within its powers of political non-intervention, to keep this strategy, wherever it develops, well posted with information, and to alert all member nations as to the identity of international traffickers, the ships, and even the aircraft they may use, and the routes of supply and distribution.

But, as U.S. experience amply proves, hard, painstaking investigation by highly trained officers, with their noses very close to the trail of traffickers, can alone reinforce intelligence to repel this evil. It is a task for men, prepared to whisk off their coats, and meet risks boldly. One U.S. Narcotics Law Enforcement Officer, Mr. George H. White, District Supervisor at the Bureau of Narcotics for six New England States, believes in combating drug traffickers by masquerading as one of them himself.

Skilled in this role, he won the confidence of a notorious Ecuadorian trafficker, Manuel Jarrin. When White, with his chauffeur, drove up to Jarrin's mountain lair, a beautifully placed Quito villa, nearly 10,000 ft above sea level, he was accepted on his own credentials as an influential dope purchaser.

'All right,' said Jarrin, a small, sixty-five year old, sly faced, magnate, 'As you'll pay for it, I can let you have three pounds of raw opium.' He opened a drawer and handed a brown paper package to White. A moment's inspection convinced him it was genuine dope.

Then, with a nod to Pedro, ostensibly his chauffeur, a man no bigger than the bandit, he tensed his muscles for action. For 'Pedro', casting aside servility, stepped suddenly close to Jarrin and said greatly to that criminal's discomfiture.

'I, Philip Abdon Guerra, Colonel of the Ecuadorian Army and chief of the National Police, place you, Manuel Jarrin, under immediate arrest, as a confirmed and dangerous narcotics trafficker.'

Jarrin's self confidence wilted like a dahlia in a black frost. But, as White closed in on him, whipping out a pair of handcuffs, his nerve returned. As one bracelet clicked on his wrist, he shrieked for help, and tore into the officer, tooth and claw, like a trapped

animal. At once, his strongly built wife, accompanied by a posse of relations and native servants, streamed into the room. Their alarm exploded into uproar as they saw their master semi-pinioned.

It would have been useless to threaten such a howling mob with a revolver. But White also carried a blackjack or truncheon and, as one woman tried to wrench Jarrin from his grasp, he brought it down smartly on her wrist. She staggered back, moaning and clutching her arm, whereupon an Indian woman, a baby on her back, rushed ferociously at him, swinging a heavy iron preserving pan.

Up flew her arm. Down came a swishing blow. He tried to parry it. But one edge of this weapon, wielded by an Amazon's muscles, struck him on the edge of the forehead. He reeled, but though three parts dazed, clung still to his half-handcuffed prisoner. Colonel Guerra gave stout-hearted aid, but two men alone, against that mass of outraged, mawling women, could not have prevailed, and Jarrin must have escaped his deserts had not a detachment of the Guardia Civil, Colonel Guerra's men, forewarned of a possible fight, stormed into the room, dragged off the Amazons, and restored the law's full dignity.

The villa, when searched afterwards, proved a store-house of narcotic drugs, including heroin, raw opium, morphine, cocaine and marihuana. The bandit, Jarrin, was the biggest operator in his country. The police found, also, a secret laboratory used by two corrupt chemists to process opium into morphine. All this hideous stuff, like much of that refined to-day in Europe's clandestine factories, was destined for the American market.

So strong, indeed, is America's fear of European drug traffickers that special agents are periodically sent across the Atlantic to harry them. Co-operating with Interpol, and working on the ground with European anti-drug squads, these officers have attacked heroin supply sources in Italy, Turkey and France. In one case, illicit factories, closed down in Yugoslavia, moved to Istanbul, but thanks to the American under-cover agent's intervention, an international gang there, over 30 strong, was broken up, and its clandestine laboratory demolished.

Farther West, Marseilles is a favoured port for drug traffickers, and sometimes their operations are closely linked with counterfeiting. Heroin smugglers, detected at Naples in November 1950,

and in another instance at Trieste in August 1952, were found with counterfeit dollars, the origin of which was traced, through Interpol inquiries, to a secret printing shop in Buffalo, U.S.A. The gang's contacts, thus financed, went to Europe to 'buy' dope, after which, having smuggled it home, they very obviously intended to dispose of it for colossal profits and valid cash.

Much foxiness is essential to gain control over these evil traffickers. Accepted by the Sûreté at Marseilles in his true colours, Mr. George White, on a drug suppression mission to Europe, again resorted to his well-trying underground role of dope buyer. On the Sûreté's advice, he sauntered unaccompanied, looking very much the brassy American business man, into an Indo Chinese café in the Old Quarter. The proprietress, a Frenchwoman named 'Zizi', threw him an inquiring eye. Knowing that neither she nor her husband, an Indo Chinese, could resist drugs—both were dealers and addicts—White soon began a conversation of interest to her.

'You, American rich man, with good dollars, lots of good dollars, and likee buy a few little drugs to take back home and sell, sell very big profit. Uh?' He reacted with just sufficient finesse, not one shade too enthusiastic, to excite her bargaining sense. 'Very good, Zizi co-operate,' she murmured.

A further meeting was arranged. But, on this occasion, Zizi gathered her whole 'crew' to greet him, her husband, and three Chinese agents. White declared his proposition. The accomplices began whispering among themselves, their faces by no means masks of Oriental inscrutability, as if debating his bona fides. Then, wordlessly, the husband padded up to a cupboard, pulled out a drawer, and put a packet of dope in his hands. Instantly, the under-cover agent whistled. Whereupon, to the company's alarm, a force of French detectives crowded into the room and arrested all five.

Zizi, foreseeing an abrupt and cheerless end to her prosperous bar business, pleaded for leniency. 'Me no go to prison,' she cried. 'Me tell all, tell where I get the stuff.' White, after consulting with the Sûreté Inspector, agreed to trust her. Zizi then led him to a café in the Corsican sector where, quite unashamedly, she introduced him to her chief supplier, a man named Dominique.

Boldness pays, reflected White. 'I'm leaving,' he said, 'for the

United States to-morrow. What I want most is to take back with me some good dope. Zizi here says I can rely on you to let me have some at reasonable prices.' Assured, after further palaver, that he had dollars sufficient for a big purchase, Dominique gave him a rendezvous for midnight in the Old Quarter. 'Meet me there, Zizi with you—she knows the spot. And I'll bring the stuff. You pay me well,' he said, gruffly.

White laid his plans carefully. He had been caught in traps before. The U.S. Vice Consul, Mr. Canup, wanted the pleasure of witnessing an important arrest, so shortly before zero hour, he and Inspector Pasquier of the Sûreté hid themselves within call of the dark alley.

It was cold, silent and obscure as White strode forward with Zizi to collect his dope. He saw nothing, heard nothing, until suddenly Dominique's voice snapped out from the shadowy outline of the brick wall.

'You have the money?' White pulled out a fat wad of dollars. 'Good,' barked Dominique, stepping forward from his hiding place and fetching, with a swift action, from inside his shirt a canvas bag full of heroin pouches. 'We do big deal.'

We do, chum, reflected White, as, with cat-like quickness, he raised his hidden revolver to the moon and fired, his signal for aid. 'You see,' he said sharply, 'I'm an American Narcotics Law Enforcement Officer, employed to stop rackets like yours for a long time.'

Then, thinking he might manage this arrest single-handed, he saw an unexpectedly heavily built figure lumbering towards him from the shadows. So, Dominique was not alone. Zizi, sensing trouble, scampered off, just as the newcomer, evidently Dominique's bodyguard, charged him like a bull.

Fortunately, the French inspector and the U.S. Vice Consul quickly joined the struggling trio. The Consul, however, nearly set the heroin smuggler free, for just as Inspector Pasquier got a lock on the bodyguard's powerful neck, Mr. Canup swung aloft his truncheon, his intention being very plainly to put the bodyguard to sleep with a well delivered crack. Instead, in the semi darkness, his aim went wide, and the full force of his blow descended not on the crook's head, but on the French Inspector's wrist!

Additional help soon arrived. For, alerted by the shots and shouts, two gendarmes dashed into the fray and, after a brief struggle, Dominique and his bodyguard, a young Corsican seaman, were both handcuffed. So, another dope distributor temporarily 'resigned' operations.

By brilliant examples of patient investigation, the French police in 1953 succeeded in tracing, closing down and arresting the operators of two large-scale clandestine heroin factories. One, in Marseilles, was discovered following the arrest of two pedlars in Algiers. The other factory situated at Montgeron, some thirty kilometres south of Paris, was traced through the alacrity with which the police shadowed the mistress of one of the suspects. Thirty-four year old Marie Poteau was no mean driver. Once before, as a police car tried to stick to her smart Peugeot, while she waltzed it, with a Grand Prix driver's flair, in and out of Paris's frenzied traffic lanes, her pursuers were left hopelessly baffled. But, on the second occasion, unknown to her, they trailed her to Montgeron.

Here, though she disappeared inside a villa, standing isolated in its own grounds, her presence there, the police officers soon perceived, did not advertise a lover's week-end nest. Scouting round for an observation post, the detectives deputed to watch and report, selected a small upper room in a railwayman's cottage—it was the best vantage point they could find. And, to cloak their real business, they let it be known that they were radio technicians, appointed to investigate complaints of interference to sets caused by the local railway lines. For six months, observations continued from this room, during which the detectives, using a telephoto camera, 'shot' and registered everyone visiting or leaving the villa.

Then, assured of the identity of the plotters, the Sûreté raided the place. Every room, except for the kitchen and three bedrooms, contained dope or heroin manufacturing equipment.

Even the garage had its quota, a neatly arranged plant for purifying morphine and converting it into heroin. The more valuable apparatus seized during the raid included an electric vacuum pump and electric pulveriser. Most of the gang, either arrested on the spot, or rounded up subsequently, had been lucratively engaged in this vile business since 1950. And hidden in the villa, the police

retrieved, also, five automatic pistols and a miscellaneous collection of Swiss watch movements. So, by dint of hard physical grind, allied to endless patience, attributes without which no detective can justify his salt, a gang of smugglers, illicit drug manufacturers and violent criminals was put out of action. Nor can one estimate how many peddling cheapjacks were suddenly cut off from supplies.

Sometimes, the basis of an important police discovery may be a mere trifle, springing from any one of a thousand acts of simple negligence such as few of us fail to commit at least once in our lifetimes. In January 1951, for instance, a Post Office clerk in Santiago spotted a tiny cascade of white powder, filtering through the corner of an ill-wrapped package. He put a pinch of it to his tongue, grimaced and reported his suspicions. Inside the packet, as the Post Office's laboratory staff soon discovered, was a popular review, the reading matter of which was probably immaterial to the envelope of white powder squeezed inside its pages. 'This envelope 'leaked'. And, its powder content, analysed, turned out to be the drug addicts' 'death medicine', cocaine hydrochloride.

The sender was traced without difficulty. He was but a pawn, however, in an elaborately planned drug traffic. To him fell the job of forwarding weekly copies of this review, primed exactly as the intercepted copy, to an accomplice in Buenos Aires. The police concentrated their investigations on the drug's source of supply. This, through a combined South American police action, finally directed inquiries to La Paz, Bolivia. Here, an Arab, helped by his two sons and a shady chemist, ran a clandestine plant, and, as his black-marketing ruse, cleverly dressed up his dope as cocoa cakes, cocoa powder and cocoa extracts. He then exported the deadly stuff to Santiago. And quantities of his cakes, thus adulterated, were even shipped to agents in the United States. Cuba, too, suffered from this trafficking. But all came clean in the investigation, the ring of traffickers being smashed, the channels of distribution blocked, and factory equipment confiscated—thanks, primarily, to a trickle of powder on a post office counter.

Such alertness must be emulated everywhere. For co-operation between all accredited drug-fighting bodies and humane-minded nations is a 'must' of modern civilisation. Every scrap of evidence, seized in a raid, may be useful. A letter found on a Chinese

pedlar, arrested in Boston, U.S.A., set off with the I.B.'s help a police inquiry in Amsterdam, and that Chinaman's suppliers ceased business. Similarly an arrest in Amsterdam led to the identification of a gang of Chinese seamen drug traffickers, whose supply port was Singapore, and a port of call, Limehouse, London.

If most seamen smugglers carry their dope in belly bands, others secrete it in hiding places of devilish ingenuity, cavities bored in the teakwood doors of lockers on their vessels, then neatly sealed, inside fire extinguishers, cigarette packages, packets of chewing gum, and even inside crutches and artificial legs. And no-one knows where this traffic may outcrop next or whose perverted mind may direct it.

Probably the most unforeseeable sensation in the anti-drug war conducted in this era is attributable to the defection of an Italian intellectual. This man, a master brain, such as writers of detective fiction never tire of creating, was honoured by an Italian University with a professorial post, and he himself acted as technical director of a firm licensed to sell substances containing drugs.

After extensive leakages had been traced to him, he admitted, when arrested, that since 1948 he had misappropriated 530 kilogrammes of heroin from the firm's stocks. By this appalling leakage, a racket of world-wide dimensions, still not exhaustively probed or cleared up, came to light. Italy, unhappily, deals gently, too damned gently, with firms that abuse their trust as manufacturers of medical salves, a trust that should be guarded as zealously as the professional integrity of any surgeon, doctor or nurse. However, the Italian police, aided by Interpol's inquiries, are convinced that the underground organisation, allegedly directed by this professor, in a four year period disposed of nearly 1,100 kilogrammes of narcotics, made up as follows: 900 kilogrammes of heroin, 42 kilogrammes of opium, 22 kilogrammes of cocaine, 38 kilogrammes of codeine and 70 kilogrammes of morphine—a ton of the world's deadliest dope.

Most of this was shipped or intended for smuggling by well-used tracks to dope syndicates and pedlars in the United States. There, ingeniously distributed, sometimes under the guise of lawful medicaments, such wares are loaded with powers of destruction quite as ghastly in their impact on individual lives as

hydrogen or atomic bombs. One need merely glance at drug addicts, lying in a hospital ward, life's greenness and sweetness petrified in them, to feel at once an outrageous anger against those who deal in these poisons. The wrath of man is their just desert. That wrath, too, should be invested with his strongest punitive powers. Whoever, moreover, withholds an honest hand as opportunity permits in helping to suppress this evil may count himself an accessory to it.

CHAPTER SEVEN

INTERPOL, GREAT BRITAIN, IN ACTION

NOTE: Fictitious names are used for all convicted persons still living referred to in this chapter

GREAT Britain became a member of the re-established I.C.P.C. in 1946. The office of Interpol G.B., as it is to-day, was set up in June 1949 and incorporated as a separate unit within Scotland Yard's formidable ramifications—a decision due to Sir Ronald Howe, C.V.O., M.C., now Deputy Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, who at that time, as an Assistant Commissioner, was head of the Yard's C.I. Branch, the business of which is criminal investigation. And although elevated in rank and title, Sir Ronald Howe remains, as he was in 1946, Interpol's Representative for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

On the third floor then of the impressively undecorative new seven-storied white stone block, overlooking the Thames Embankment and correctly styled New Scotland Yard, a corridor leads one to the Yard's most internationally-minded room. It commands, incidentally, probably the best view in London of Whitehall's entrance to Downing Street. Here, with their desks set at right angles to each other, the surrounding walls well charted with diagrams of Interpol's radio links and maps of member nations, sit two detective officers, the office staff of British Interpol. 'Sit' perhaps is a misnomer. For, sometimes this normal sized office must cope with high pressure inquiries, demanding answers whether from China or Peru, at top speed.

Owing to the heavy post-war influx of aliens into Britain, and the consistently rising popularity of foreign travel as a native pastime, provincial, county and borough police forces forward each year an expanding but oddly assorted volume of inquiries to this office. Inquiries, too, originate, almost no restrictions being admitted, from all points of the compass, globe wide. They may relate, at any hour of darkness or light, to a fugitive offender in Australia, a narcotics pedlar of British nationality caught red handed in San Francisco, a runaway murderer from Glasgow traced to Cairo or Baghdad, or to some Continental bullion thief on a business visit to London. As its services became better known, so this office's activities increased, in some years, by twenty per cent. Records for 1952 and 1953 may be contrasted as follows:

	1952	1953
Sets of Correspondence (New Registrations of both foreign and home origin)	670	783
Messages - - - - -	1818	2058
Radio Messages Received - - -	1113	1347
Radio Messages Transmitted - -	622	569

Yet, if pocket sized physically, few limits can be set to Interpol G.B.'s resources. As a unit of Scotland Yard, paid for and maintained by the Home Office, it marshals the same facilities as the Yard itself, and few authorities, on request, will deny it information. The national interest is thereby well served.

Her Majesty's Consular representatives overseas, to whom the local police report all troubles, caused by British citizens, sometimes find a citizen in serious trouble indeed. Then, full particulars are wanted about him. Through the Foreign Office's Consular service, the inquiry is referred to 'Interpol G.B.', and that citizen, allegedly up to mischief, would be confounded if he knew what could be learned about him, merely with the help of a few discreet telephone calls.

Those guilty of misbehaviour abroad not seldom have a record at home. Hence the limelight on Mr. Anonymous may first be shunted into focus through internal inquiries at the Yard's C.R.O. (Criminal Record Office) or from the General Registry, where details of anyone ever to cross the Yard's tracks, in any capacity, honest or dishonest, are filed. Word via Somerset House can

soon verify the gentleman's name and date of birth. Once the Office gets a start, having delved out a single, concrete, irrefutable fact, on which to research, such as the man's true name, new material about him can be gleaned quickly.

The proof of these procedures lies in the range of their discoveries. For a while, a thirty-year old, English born international trickster clung to the alias of Rex Macclesfield. 'Interpol', however, spotted him in Paris, using a fraudulent passport in the name of Louis Max. But, instead of returning home, he pushed on with his Continental journeys and petty trafficking. He spoke French and German well, added to which he had a useful smattering of the Scandinavian languages.

When, finally, the Oslo police arrested him on a thieving charge in July 1954, he had left behind him a trail of theft, running through France, Germany, Denmark and Sweden. In Stockholm, an architect befriended him and gave him a bed in his house—hospitality he repaid by stealing a camera, a pair of binoculars and a 50 kroner Swedish note. Thieving of that calibre, nothing very venturesome, but furtive and mean spirited, was his line of crime. Not surprisingly the Norwegian police, fed up with this malingering Briton, decided to pitch him home. And because of their decision to repatriate him, a decision communicated to Her Majesty's Consul in Oslo, Interpol G.B. looked into his history.

There was no difficulty in determining his true identity. For, as an old 'customer' of the C.R.O., the Yard had record both of his proper name and favourite aliases. Moreover, to add piquancy to his enforced homecoming he was 'wanted', as the Yard's files disclosed, for petty larcenies, in one instance false pretences, committed in Sheffield, Barrow-in-Furness and at Stratford on Avon.

As advised by the Norwegian Police, he was returned on board the SS. *Blenheim*, and delivered to Newcastle Docks on July 26th, 1954. A reception committee took him in hand. Tried at Sheffield, when his other English offences were taken into account, he received a year's imprisonment. Under the Larceny Act, Section 33 (sub section 4) British citizens can be punished at home for 'receiving property abroad, knowing it to have been stolen' but this Court had no jurisdiction to consider offences committed in foreign countries. Such offences still stand. Thus, as the outcome

of eight international police telegrams, this trickster's thieving wanderlust reached a walled-in halt.

Occasionally Interpol G.B. runs into an exceptionally crafty twister. No-one in recent times taxed its ingenuities or puzzled it more for a few weeks than fraudsman, Arthur French, a man with a multitude of aliases. French, a walking lamp-post, 6 ft 2 ins in his socks, with super-prominent 'listening post' ears, was born in Stockport, Lancashire, in 1915. He and his American born partner—Norman Krebs, also a man of aliases, and also a six footer—were as an Interpol international circulation advised wanted on charges of uttering false cheques by the Dutch authorities at Willemstad, the capital city of Curacao in the formerly pirate-infested Caribbean.

The Dutch said their extradition would be requested from whichever country arrested them. Directly this news arrived, Interpol G.B. stopped the 'bolt-holes'. Then, hardly had its officers filed the International Circulation before they received information that French intended to apply for a British passport from an address in Christchurch, Hants. Presumably, he had mislaid the passport originally issued to him. The Yard needed now to act quickly. The Home Office does not permit the police in Britain, as is the practice in several countries overseas, to arrest a man, merely on receipt of an Interpol circulation. He may be 'housed', that is watched discreetly. Or, he may be pulled in, if reputedly a man of violence. Otherwise, a provisional arrest warrant must be applied for and secured at a local magistrate's court before he can be taken into custody. That procedure eats up time, often exceedingly precious time. But it guarantees the offender's right to know the charge preferred against him. The Bow Street Magistrate, to whom application was made for a provisional warrant of arrest for Albert French, made no objection. But, while official interest in his presence mounted, French himself must have had a hunch that he was tempting fate a trifle too brazenly. For, despite searching investigations, he had, it seemed, in police parlance 'taken a powder', i.e. vanished.

The detective, working on the London 'end' of these inquiries, traced a girl friend of French's, and hoped she could tell him where he was living. But the girl, an upstanding, resolute blonde, adopted 'Mum' for her theme song when he interviewed her in

her Bayswater 'digs'. To all his shrewd questionings, she threw back her head, punctuating his remarks with nods of defiance. No-one could have expressed better her firm decision not to let fall a careless word. For the moment, French's whereabouts seemed incorrigibly elusive.

Then, surprisingly, Interpol G.B. received information of the arrival in England of French's partner, the one time Seattle Citizen, Norman Krebs. And Krebs, to judge by the address he gave on landing, was flying high. During his sojourn in Britain, his address was a world-esteemed London hotel. However, numerous aliens, some arrant mischief-makers, write down that address for official interests, although they have no intention whatsoever of residing there or of ever dining, no matter how costly their girl friend's demands, amid the hotel's white shirted splendours. The name alone is their goal—and satisfaction.

Thus it happened that both these slick fraudsmen, described in Paris as *grands escrocs internationaux*, and wanted by police forces in U.S.A., Mexico, Guatemala, Venezuela and the Cuban Republic as well as in the Netherlands West Indies, were 'somewhere in Britain'. Embarrassment indeed! Yet just as Scotland Yard's inquiries bobbed rather indecisively in rough water, the skies cleared.

Krebs, it was reported, had left Manchester Airport on May 28th, Paris bound. Immediately Interpol G.B. radioed this information to the International Bureau—information it forwarded with a sense of relief. It now became the task of Interpol's headquarters to run Mr. Krebs to earth. Radio activity probed hard to discover him.

He moved fast. For he landed in Paris, as inquiries afterwards disclosed, short of funds, and in a tearaway haste. He spent merely five hours in the French capital, but during this period, was in and out of night clubs, off the Champs-Élysées and in the Pigalle district, cashing false cheques like a snowman dropping flakes. Altogether, according to the Sûreté's information, he cashed during this paper-distributing spree false cheques to the value of 450 U.S. dollars. He may have uttered others which clubs, for fear of being implicated in currency infringements, preferred not to report. Thus, in the money again, he flew to Lisbon. The Portuguese police, advised of this fugitive, failed to collect him,

for, as their inquiries showed, he had stopped only a few minutes at Lisbon's airport before taking a plane to Madrid. Yet, fast as he belted through the skies, Interpol's radio messages travelled faster. At Madrid, he booked a first-class ticket to New York, but he never used it. For, the Spanish police swooped and caught him in the very act of boarding the Transatlantic air liner.

Life for Norman Krebs now became grey and sombre. To be snatched from the air, divorced from any further participation in gaudy nights or night-club frolics, and locked in a cell in Madrid is a transformation scene more comfortably described than experienced. And there he languished while Interpol, Spain, informed the I.B. of their capture, and afterwards, officials in the Foreign Offices of Spain and the Netherlands opened their respective extradition treaties.

Scotland Yard received this news with as much joy as any policeman permits himself when a nuisance disappears. Yet, one question remained uppermost—where under heaven, and in the name of all Elephants and Castles, was Arthur French still in hiding? With this problem hard on his mind, one of the Yard's Interpol officers decided to revisit French's girl friend in Bayswater. On this occasion, he found her a changed personality, as communicative now as formerly she had been aloof. She was, he learned immediately, in an ill-temper with Master French, in fact bitterly disposed towards him; he had, apparently, cold-shouldered her in favour of a new girl friend in the Earl's Court district.

Lovable-possessiveness, merging into hostility, not to say vindictiveness, is no longer cautious or shy before policemen. Restraint goes galloping.

So, with a courteous thank you to Blonde No. 1, the detective quickly set off in search of Blonde No. 2. He found her at home. 'Where's Arthur French?' he asked her, in the privacy of her Earl's Court flat, adding, 'By hiding him, you may do yourself little good.' She fluttered her eyelids, amazed. 'But he's—he's not hh-ere' she stammered, 'nnnot in this country. Don't you kkk-now, he's in ppp-rison in Mmm-adrid. I hhhh-eard from him there only yes-sss-terday.'

This was startling information. But the detective checked his surprise more sharply when the girl, rummaging in 'her handbag, brought out the prisoner's letter written to her from Madrid. For,

plain beyond all doubt, this was French's handwriting. Yet Krebs, the American, is detained in Madrid, he reflected. Now this evidence refutes it. And faced with an improbability, the detective wisely cast around for a logical explanation.

To Interpol's headquarters, he forwarded all relevant details of French, his photograph and set of fingerprints included. Then Monsieur Sicot's staff, at his request, asked Interpol, Spain, to check Krebs' identity and, in particular, compare his fingerprints with those forwarded. When that was done, the Madrid Prison Governor knew he was entertaining not Norman Krebs, as the man's American passport affirmed, but the British born fraudsman, Arthur French.

Since French had used Krebs' identity to leave England, one hardly needed clairvoyant powers to suppose that he might have entered Britain under the same guise. And already conspicuously assisted by regard for the evergreen principle of '*cherchez la femme*' the Interpol Officer made another call on French's former girl friend in Bayswater. He wanted to probe her memory for details of French's movements earlier on immediately after his arrival in Britain.

'Can you remember?' he asked her, 'where you met him originally—as soon as you knew he was back in this country?' She named a snack bar in the Strand. 'Was he alone? Where did you go? Who did you meet? Were the pair of you ever joined by a third party, a tall, loosely built American, for instance? And what did French do? Now think, and think deep; go back to the time you met him, and tell me all you remember about it.'

She talked for a while of their visit to a popular hotel in the Strand. But no-one called Krebs, or any male friend of French's had, she assured the detective, shown up. However, during their dinner together, French had, she remembered, left her for a few minutes while he sent off an urgent business telegram—a cablegram, she thought.

'Who to?'

'Oh, I don't know. But it was to someone, or somewhere beginning with "an"—it sounded like.'

'Was it Antigua?'

'Why, yes, that's it!'

Fortunately, at this hotel, in common with various other

London hotels, there is an administrative rule, which requires a record to be kept of all outgoing cablegrams dispatched by casual visitors or residents. Thus, as police inquiries soon discovered, on May 14th and also the following day, French sent cablegrams from this hotel to an accommodation address in Antigua. He dispatched them, too, in the name of Krebs, and it was as Krebs he signed the hotel register.

To the Interpol officer there now seemed a strong possibility that the telegraphic address, used by French, held a clue to Krebs' hiding place. So, back in the office of Interpol G.B., he gave shape to this suspicion by drafting a further message to the I.B., Paris, in which he requested that the Antigua address should be investigated, as a likely lead to the whereabouts of Arthur French's missing partner.

This radio message came before Monsieur Aubé, head of Interpol's Department of Police Documentation, on Saturday, July 3rd. I was in Paris at the time, and so had a spectator's view, albeit a long distance one, of subsequent actions. M. Aubé promptly drafted a cablegram in English to the Police Commissioner, Antigua, stating that on information supplied by Scotland Yard, it appeared likely that the fugitive swindler Norman Krebs, for whom there was a warrant of arrest, was hiding on the Island. He quoted all relevant details, and asked for Krebs to be arrested, if discovered.

'Candidly though,' he said, 'I felt I was chancing my arm.' No-one could be surprised if a tiny island in the British West Indies had never heard of the International Criminal Police Commission. Yet faith, or his grain of it, triumphed handsomely. On Monday morning, 48 hours later, M. Aubé studied, with obvious satisfaction, Antigua's answering cablegram. It told him that the wanted man, Norman Krebs, had been identified, arrested, and was now held, pending further instructions.

So, prompted by Interpol G.B. two amazingly long-range interceptions of international crooks had succeeded, one in Spain, the other in the West Indies. Without an Interpol officer's smart investigations in London, one at least of this slippery pair of far-travelled swindlers might still be on the run. As now contrived, both men must answer for substantial cheque frauds, perpetrated in many countries with, it is alleged, the help of 1,000 false

cheques, manufactured on their initiative at a counterfeiter's shop in Haiti—and the greater number of such counterfeits, clever ones incidentally, purported to be cheques of the American Trust Company, San Francisco.

The Bank of England, never an institution to be agitated, is, at least, concerned whenever fraudulent currency notes outcrop in Britain. The police are expected to trace, with the very minimum delay, the sources distributing any such counterfeits, and what is perhaps more vital, unearth the illicit 'works' or craftsmen responsible for their manufacture.

A queer case began with the alertness of a cinema cashier in the Paddington (London) area early in 1954. A heavily-built woman, whom she believed to be a foreigner—a false belief, as it proved, despite the woman's inability to speak English—changed a £1 note when paying for her seat at a *matinée*. The girl disliked the note's feel. 'It's stiff and funny,' she told the cinema manager, and he, equally suspicious of the note's firm, uncrispy touch, telephoned to the local police headquarters.

When, therefore, the woman shuffled out of the cinema, a plain clothes detective requested her company, and escorted her to the station. Search, there, of her handbag brought to light five or six other £1 notes, all dud specimens. A Maltese, and thus a British subject, she found the English language beyond her, but through an interpreter, gave the police her address.

Detectives, turned loose in her rooms, soon accumulated a fair-sized hoard of fraudulent money, consisting in all of approximately 150 counterfeit Bank of England £1 notes. Many, they discovered, served as the hard core to balls of knitting wool. They recovered, too, an unusual amount of loose change, mostly 10/- notes accompanied by little heaps of silver. They arrested the woman, her two sons with her. But, she professed to be absolutely innocent of any counterfeiting activities, or even of uttering notes knowing them to be fraudulent. According to her statement, a compatriot in Marseilles, called, shall we say, Mario, had given her the money in exchange for some goods she had sold him. And, wrapping it inside balls of knitting wool, was her way of banking it, or keeping it safe.

After a conference at Scotland Yard, it was agreed that Mario's story should be heard and, either through him or other sources,

the counterfeiting den that had cooked up these notes, traced and put out of trade. Otherwise, as the C.I.D. realised, the Bank of England's anxieties might turn oppressive.

To two detective officers, experienced travellers both, fell the duty of going first to Paris, taking with them examples of the forged notes, and by personal contact with M. Langlais, head of the I.B.'s anti-counterfeiting department in St Cyr, see if he could identify from his records the counterfeiting gang which made them. Then, whatever their success in Paris, the officers were detailed to interview the Maltese, Mario.

At first disappointment met them. For examination of their notes yielded no obvious tie-up with any forged specimens lodged in Interpol's files. Whoever concocted the Paddington £1's did not, it seemed, belong to an international gang of counterfeiters already recognised for peculiarities in their workmanship. The detectives hoped for better luck in Marseilles.

Again, their mission started off unpromisingly. True, the Marseilles Sûreté expected them, and planned to meet them on arrival. But, though assured of full co-operation by the French authorities, two dog-tired British officers demanded only a full sleep when they landed at Marseilles airport at 5.15 a.m. An hour late on leaving the Paris airport at Orly—it was 2.45 a.m. when they took off—they had endured all the miseries inescapable when flying between the hours of *le chien* and *le loup*. In such a howling no-man's-land of time, the investigatory spirits of the most ardent police officers are blunted, if not chilled. However, after a reasonable snatch of sleep, their spirits revived, and their mission explained, an officer at the Sûreté's headquarters, introduced them to Professor Robert, head of the police forensic laboratory. He took one glance at their fraudulent £1's, then smiled. He recognised them instantly as the products of a local counterfeiter, Raymond Tobino, a watch-maker of Italian origin, but better known, because of his eccentricities, as 'La Grenouille' (the frog).

Whenever free of prison—a pleasure celebrated with some regularity—Tobino lost little time in burrowing into some low haunt and re-establishing his forger's craft. But, once his passion for counterfeiting blew over, some schizophrenic fit mastered him. In the throes of it, he felt impelled to recant of his currency fabrications and so, to ease his conscience, drew up in flawless

penmanship an impressive document, disclosing the inside story of his latest activities. He thus wrote down a full account of his secret 'den', his equipment, his issues and their circulation, even elaborating, at times, on intricacies in technique he had encountered and overcome. Other counterfeiters, not surprisingly, never joined in any conspiracy with him. For this reason, after drawing up his bill of indictment, he had the habit of forwarding it either to the local police or, if especially pleased with it, direct to the Sûreté Nationale, Paris! The ironic beauty behind such accounts lay not so much in their craziness, as in their dispassionate presentation of fact. Yet, if one side of 'The Frog' was deranged, the other half of him, governed by his forger's itch, was dangerous. 'This tactile-fingered old man, accurate and conscientious in his craftsmanship, touched few currencies he did not embellish. He counterfeited U.S. dollar bills, 100 French franc notes, Ethiopian dollars and Italian lire as craftily as he faked green £1 notes. Whatever he fancied for the day, he 'cooked' in a currency sense. To date, his criminal record ran to close on twenty convictions, all for counterfeiting offences, but on the occasion of his last arrest, eighteen months earlier, he had forfeited his bail, and bolted. No-one knew where he had gone.

The officers reckoned that a man with a tragic-comic criminal character like the Frog's could scarcely hide himself for long in Marseilles. But Marseilles is not like London. Here, in this grimy, congested, quick-tempered city, one of the world's foremost hot-beds of international crime, counterfeiting like smuggling in Tangier, or black marketing in gold in the Persian gulf, is but a gentle deceit. Moreover, in some countries, but not in Great Britain, so that everyone shall live happily with everyone else, officialdom often draws a veil over the less ambitious, and therefore, less obstreperous of its anti-social practitioners. You can grow weary of sending the same man to prison for the same offence, year after year.

The Scotland Yard officers then tried to trace Mario, the Maltese. He, too, was elusive. The Marseilles police conducted them to all his known city haunts, even visiting some piggeries on the outskirts of Marseilles which he owned. Here, ironically wagging pigs' tails bid them adieu, but not before they had spoken with some sour-faced sons of their 'wanted' man. The sons said

no more than that their father was not at home. Yet, ultimately after much hue and cry, he was pulled in and grilled. What he had to tell, however, was hardly helpful. He recognised the photograph of the Maltese woman, but she, he said, had given him notes similar to those the officers produced, whether false or genuine he did not know, in exchange for some property he had sold her. That was his statement. Not for all the scorpions in Hades would he vary it.

Feeling satisfied, after further inquiries, that Tobino, the Frog, was temporarily out of business, the two detectives packed up and flew home. Brought for trial at the Old Bailey, the Maltese woman and her sons were acquitted on charges of uttering counterfeit Bank of England notes. In spite of this, the Yard's researches abroad did at least show tangible results. For shortly afterwards, the French police triumphantly announced their re-arrest of Tobino, the Frog. Incurable, redoubtable, split-minded old forger! No doubt he will go on enjoying spells of counterfeiting and the drafting of fresh chapters of superbly inscribed confessions, sandwiched in between his prison sentences, until the great bell tolls for him.

Foreign rascals do not, customarily, hasten to Britain in order to elude their own home police forces. The Channel's width, and Scotland Yard's far publicised fame, act as powerful deterrents. Some, nevertheless, try it on, believing, if they ever feel bound to any kind of faith, that somewhere in London, cloaked by fog, in both a physical and police sense, they can hide in safety until the hue and cry for them in their homeland has blown over.

A young Spaniard, wanted for a daring jewel robbery, committed inside the Cathedral of Seville, made this trip in the summer of 1953. He had, so the Spanish authorities alleged, rifled the Chapel of the Virgin of the Kings, removing precious stones and gold pieces valued at 700 million French francs—a fantastic haul in contrast to which a £40,000 bullion robbery must be rated as a humdrum criminal venture. But if there are appreciable difficulties in the way of disposing of bar gold, mountainous difficulties arise once it becomes necessary to unburden oneself, at some kind of profit, of holy ornaments.

This eighteen year old boy, whose home was in the Calle de Julio Cesar (Julius Caesar Street), apparently chummed up with

a verger in the Cathedral. So, after acquainting himself with the Cathedral's layout and system of custodianship, the boy seized his chance, and secreted himself among the treasures in the Chapel on the night of April 14th, 1953. The doors were locked. The lights dimmed. Alone in this Holy Shrine, he busied himself by wrenching from their sockets a great glitter of gems, symbols of the utmost sacredness, that bedizened the Image of the Virgin. Then, in the morning, if the allegations against him are true, he sneaked out unnoticed, his pockets crammed with nearly three quarters of a million pounds worth of riches.

Unimaginable dismay possessed the Nun, Sister Mary Ignatius, after discovery of this outrageous robbery. In all her years, as Keeper of the Treasury of the Virgin's Image, she had not known even the tiniest gem to be defiled or a chip cut from the statue. The authorities were unsparing in their efforts to trace the lost valuables, but several weeks passed before so much as a clue came their way. The boy was not a suspect. In fact, on May 7th, he left Seville for Paris, travelling with a properly authorised passport.

Then came a discovery which first tilted the accusing finger towards him. At a local silversmiths, the police found an expanding gold bracelet, studded with seventeen diamonds and another piece of unusual jewellery, consisting of a single diamond blazing on a mount of gold. Both the Chaplain Royal, and the Keeper of the Treasury identified these relics as part of the Image's missing treasury. The silversmith explained that it was the boy who gave him the jewels and asked him to sell them. That one so young and uninfluential should own such treasures puzzled him at first. But apparently he accepted the boy's explanation that he, the boy, had bought the jewels at the Government Pawnshop (Monte de Piedad). The boy's mother, said the silversmith, confirmed their purchase.

Soon afterwards Interpol G.B. heard from the I.B. that the boy, suspected of this crime, was staying in London. He made no attempt to hide himself, but stayed at a dwelling in Regent's Park Terrace, the address of which he left behind in Paris. A Scotland Yard detective called on him. He denied any part in the robbery. Neither had he any jewels with him or, if he had, they were not discovered.

Arrested, he had first to be released since the Spanish Embassy did not, within twenty-four hours of his arrest, confirm their Government's request for his extradition. He was watched, however, and re-arrested directly confirmation came through. The usual fifteen day delay followed, during which an appeal against an extradition order can be heard, and since none was made, he was sent back for trial to Spain.

Another foreigner, a Frenchman, most ill-advisedly followed a girl to London, with a welter of strange emotions surging behind his mobile countenance. The girl, a fashion model, no longer reacted favourably, from his point of view, to his affections. He tried to soothe away her petulance, but her mind admitted no further doubt on one score; she was tired of him, and resented very strongly his attempts now to pester her. Accordingly, as the suitor rejected, he chased her into Berkeley Square, and jealous rage getting the better of his discretion, he suddenly pulled a pistol out of his overcoat pocket and from point-blank range fired three shots at her. The girl collapsed on the pavement, grievously wounded. For some days she clung precariously to life. A fractional difference in one bullet's course must have killed her. The malefactor, brought for trial before the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Goddard, and found guilty on serious charges, was sentenced to twelve years' imprisonment. Anyone, foreigner or not, aching to loose off bullets in the heart of London, should change his mind, for *le crime passionnel*, a favourite diversion with the French, fails on the whole, even allowing for a plausible villain, to draw crocodile tears from English juries. They distrust or feel embarrassed by outbursts of emotion, so have no qualms about viewing temperamental criminals in a hard, logical light.

Interpol G.B. handled also the case of a robbery extraordinary, one of the few occasions, in which an aircraft, stolen in one country, has been flown to another, short of reasons of war, and political freedom. This case originated on the night of November 22nd-23rd, 1950, when an eighteen year old boy jumped into an Auster lying out on the R.A.F. airfield at Sywell, Northampton, got the machine into the air, and set out to leave this Island as quickly as the plane could carry him.

Untutored by any flying instructor, he courted additional danger by travelling in a series of hops, a necessity he might have

avoided had not the plane lacked navigational instruments. Instead, he had to come down and get his bearings from passers-by. Landing first in a meadow off the Great North Road, outside Daventry, he tackled first a lorry driver and asked, greatly to that man's astonishment:

'Am I going right for London?' And gaining the necessary assurance, he took off afresh, crossed the Channel, and struck earth again, near Dieppe. Here a farmer gave him food and water, but, back in the air again, he was forced, finally, through running out of petrol—the plane carried just sufficient fuel for 300 miles—to drop down outside Orleans.

So far, the boy had not damaged the plane in the slightest. And, if asked to define his previous flying experience, he could say, in all truthfulness, that it was limited to a five-shilling hop at a seaside resort, and a similar stolen plane escapade when, a few months earlier, the flying bug biting him irresistibly, he had clambered into an unguarded aircraft on the Isle of Wight, and flown to Glamorgan.

Crazy about aircraft, he devoured with rare understanding every aviation book he could lay hands on, so acquiring a wealth of theoretical knowledge not without advantages, as these flights demonstrated, in practice.

Now, however, as he tried to taxi the plane to a clump of trees, intending to shelter it alongside them while he searched for a fresh supply of petrol, he had the misfortune to bump into a rabbit hole. Down went a front wheel. The Auster's nose dipped sharply. The propeller tips, flailing the ground, were buckled. Otherwise no-one could fault him for his control of the aircraft.

Interpol G.B. reported the theft to the I.B. directly it was known that the plane had crossed the Channel. So, unknown to him, the youngster provoked an Interpol circulation, but European police forces did not have to expend much energy in searching for him. Stuck, because of his buckled propeller tips, he gave himself up to the French police, and was promptly detained for illegal entry into France. Thereafter, some weeks elapsed while his extradition was arranged. And, with all formalities complete, an officer of the Northamptonshire Constabulary and one of Scotland Yard's Interpol officers called for him on March 9th, 1951 at the Santé Prison, Paris.

On the drive back from Dover, the London officer sat beside him in the police car. Whereupon the boy talked to him like an expert about aircraft construction, design and engineering principles. He revealed so acute a grasp of technicalities that his custodian, though an ex-R.A.F. pilot, was astonished by the youngster's knowledge. No-one could in fairness describe him as an international crook, embryo or actual, although through his illegal activities more than one country had been bothered. There was good stuff in him. To-day, there is justification of it. Employed by a well-known West of England aircraft company, this former runaway flier is running away now only with credits, being a first-class asset to his firm.

Sometimes, of course, highly unorthodox calls for aid arise. One riddle solved in 1954 was the mystery over the identity of a twenty-five year old blond Englishman whose body was discovered in an unoccupied tomb in the Père Lachaise Cemetery, Paris. Beside him, the cemetery keeper picked up a half empty bottle of brandy and some green capsules. There was also his passport, but the pages which related to his identity had been torn out and burnt. A tiny, charred heap proclaimed their remains. As if further to baffle recognition, the man's clothing was devoid of all labels. Someone, if not himself, had ripped them out and destroyed them.

Interpol G.B. became interested in this unhappy case following a call from Southgate Police Station. This reported the anxiety of a lady visitor, just interviewed, at the Station. On reading that morning a news item in *The Daily Express* about the Paris cemetery mystery, she felt that the description given pointed to her missing son. A few days earlier he had, she knew, hurried off to Paris, but without explanation.

An Interpol Officer got busy immediately. After obtaining a photograph of the alleged missing man, he telephoned the Paris Sûreté, asking it to transmit for checking purposes a photograph of the dead man discovered in the tomb. The picture arrived, pronto. One glance at the two prints, as they lay side by side on his desk, conveyed all the evidence of identity needed. So one aspect of a mystery, the most important initial step in any inquiry, identification of the unknown, disappeared.

Home Office Regulations define various duties of the Interpol

Office, one of which is to assist any police force in the United Kingdom in whose area a crime is discovered if, as the local police force supposes, the perpetrator has fled from the country. Thus, on behalf of the East Sussex Constabulary, Interpol G.B. flashed out search messages for William Sanchez de Pinar Hepper, the sixty-two year old Chelsea artist, found subsequently in Irun, extradited, tried and hanged for the murder on February 7th, 1954 of an eleven-year-old girl at Hove, Sussex.

Hardly had that inquiry ended before Interpol G.B. answered a fresh murder call, its task being to motivate the international machinery for tracing Ronald Chesney, the Ealing double murderer, and on many counts, the greatest black-marketeer-smuggler to weave his evil stratagems in twentieth-century Europe. Indeed, whatever criminal offence may arise, fraud or forgery, bigamy or blackmail, child murder or Swiss watch smuggling, the Yard's I.C.P.C. office needs but be 'commanded' to set its international contacts ringing.

Interpol G.B. will even, on occasion, seek the international network's help to contact a holiday-maker abroad if, say, his next of kin is suddenly killed or seriously ill or some other disaster, like floods or fire, warrant his immediate return to England. It fights shy, however, of the usual sort of missing relative case, an inquiry initiated by over-anxious parents, generally for a head-strong daughter who fails to return from her foreign holiday jaunts when expected. Perhaps she travelled with a girl friend or as one of a small party, two or three of whom are already home. And, from one of these 'safe ones', the parents receive the report, 'We last saw Christine vanishing with Jack into a café, an awful looking place in some back area in Rouen.'

Christine's continued non-appearance, the rub of it intensifying hour by hour, fills her home with the most sinister forebodings. Her parents fear she is already lost to them, the victim of some foreign devilry and now on her way, a prisoner under guard, to Cairo, Casablanca or to some dark Mediterranean haunt where white slavers hatch their plots and count their gains.

But as a rule, just after they get back from reporting their worries at the local police station, the missing seventeen-year-old humps her rucksack over their doorstep. Grinning from ear to ear, she merely says 'Sorry, Mum, I should have written to tell

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you I'd be two days late.' If pressed for a more adequate explanation, she will probably add:

'Somehow I just didn't get time to write. It slipped my head completely in all the excitements. Yes, once I did remember it, though. Then it didn't seem worth while. I knew I'd be seeing you almost as soon as my letter could reach you.'

'You could have sent a telegram, dear.'

'Oh, no, I hadn't a franc to spare.'

So much for the eternal ingenuousness of youth.

Without the interventions of Interpol G.B. the Continent, indeed the spacious globe itself, would be a safer place for absconding criminals from the British Isles. As this service is now constituted, with its rapid channels of communication, its ability to assemble vital data rapidly, it should serve as a red light to runaway malefactors. If they flee to foreign countries after committing serious crimes, they will be caught and extradited. If they go into hiding in Commonwealth Lands, they may be dealt with under the Fugitive Offenders Act and repatriated. And if they travel merely to make mischief, they should know that once caught for misbehaviour abroad, they can look forward to an involuntary home-coming. Then, if 'wanted' at home, they will not step off their ship or aircraft unescorted.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE FUGITIVE ALIEN

*For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ.*

SHAKESPEARE, Hamlet

MOST police forces, proud of their individuality and eager to serve their public well, like to tackle crime as they meet it on their own territories in their own way. This is especially true of Britain's many admirable County Constabularies. All maintain C.I.D.'s, largely of their own development, and it stimulates county pride in the force when its own men succeed in solving a criminal mystery with a local setting. Scotland Yard, though endowed with the greatest resources in Britain, possibly in any island's police organisation, is seldom asked to give assistance by the larger provincial forces.

Of the forces outside London, that of Lancashire County Constabulary, with an establishment of over 2,800 men, is the largest. It is also one of the most characteristic, hard-headed, as is the Lancashire mentality, resourceful and quick-witted in action and, as criminals foraging or 'screwing' a mansion, committing fraud, bigamy, or forgery anywhere east of Blackpool know to their cost, it is efficient. The nucleus of it lies spaciouly enclosed by woodlands at Hutton, a tiny village, largely of police residents, four miles west of Preston.

Yet the exception does happen. And in the summer of 1952, this Lancashire Police Headquarters faced a problem to solve which help was needed from British Interpol at New Scotland Yard, Interpol's international network, French and German police

officials, the Foreign Office, British Immigration authorities, the Special Branch, the American Military Government in Germany and legal experts of three nations. This concentration of powers, moreover, became necessary because of one single, undistinguished alien-resident in Britain, a twenty-six-year-old Hungarian-born Displaced Person named Imre Kilyen.

His case is remarkable, an illustration at once of an international police organisation's indispensable services and of extensive police resources mobilised to hunt down one person, the father of a lost child. Born at Buzohaza, Hungary, in April 1926, Kilyen sprang from peasant farming stock. His parents, as customary in that country, worked their holding lone-handed. On leaving school, as a fourteen-year-old, he hauled and dug beside them, probably as a listless apprentice. Four years later, he left them to join the Hungarian Army, but until his demobilisation in 1945, he remained just a sly-witted, unambitious, 'scrim-shanking' private soldier. Then, fatefully for him, Russia's 'cold war' policy cut him loose.

Like millions of others listed under the abominable terms of 'expellees', 'evictees', 'evacuees' and 'escapees', he turned westwards to protect himself from the Soviet colossus. As he travelled, so again, like great numbers similarly deprived of home, livelihood and country, he acquired animal-like qualities of cunning and 'know how', qualities precious to anyone wanting to live rough and shiftless. He worked when it suited him. So, by drift and circumstance, he reached in 1947 a Displaced Person's Camp at Kapfenberg, Germany.

From Germany, he looked to England. And, ignorant of this Island, her people and customs, he 'signed on' as a European Voluntary Worker. In June 1948, a reception committee welcomed him to Bedhampton Camp, Hampshire. Good food, a sound bed and a sympathetic staff should have been happy auguries for his new life.

Yet, either because of an innate or post-war nurtured restlessness, he could not settle down. After moving first to an E.V.W. Hostel in Swansea, he next took a job as a kitchen labourer at Reynoldstown, Glamorgan. He then worked for short spells only at jobs found for him, mostly as farmhand or cook, at Templeton, Pembrokeshire; Moreton-on-Ludd, Herefordshire;

Market Drayton, Shropshire; and Upper Killary, Glamorgan.

One may perhaps wonder how it is that so many thousands of people, who once were driven distractedly and sometimes ruthlessly from one shelter to another, ever manage to settle down afresh and recapture their poise. Yet, as Lancashire's police appreciate, the County Palatine, whither Kilyen's travels first led him in 1951, musters many thousands of aliens, nearly all of whom live decently, proving hard workers, staunch family folk, and observing high standards of thrift and honesty. This unsettled wanderer, however, soon tired of the agricultural hostel, his first home in Lancashire, and in forsaking it, suddenly darted off at an unexplored occupational tangent. He enlisted as a trainee nurse at Prestwich Hospital near Manchester. But even that job, socially more advanced than kitchen work, soon irked him. In January 1952, he failed to pass his first nurse's examination, and sooner than try again, he resigned. A period of unemployment followed. But tiring of that, he went to Salford Royal Hospital, and again contracted to work as a trainee nurse. He stuck it until June 1952. Then—and for the last time—he registered as one of the unemployed.

Meanwhile, if still an itinerant job-seeker and, let it be fairly said, job shirker at heart, he had become a family man. Lancashire brought him this luck. But she was not a Lancashire lass. In February 1951, while working at Prestwich Hospital, he met a homely young Lithuanian, a D.P. like himself, and one of the hospital's kitchen staff. They married at Bury Registry Office on September 29th, 1951. Birute Kalauiniskaite, domestic servant, or Mrs. Kilyen as she now was, continued with her hospital chores. But, since married quarters were not included in the hospital's accommodation, the two of them moved into furnished rooms in Arthur Street, Prestwich.

Mrs. Kilyen, pregnant at the time of her wedding, settled down to make herself a good wife and mother. Her bliss might not have been perfect since Kilyen was a moody, difficult, self-centred man, but their early tiffs, inevitable, as soon as the halo of romance wears thin, were trivial and quickly patched up. If, however, she awaited her baby's birth with joy, Kilyen brooded over this coming event with uneasy thoughts. The child arrived on April 9th, 1952. It was a boy, of normal weight and good health. Until a short

time beforehand, she had worked at the hospital and, as is the practice, her job remained open for her.

Baby Joseph soon awakened sullen or vicious instincts in his father. The man, falling out of work again, clearly resented the child's presence, and this resentment grew in him daily. Because of the baby's need for clothing, food and Birute's constant attention, he felt it as a barrier between them, his chief grouse being her inability to resume her hospital job, and bring him her weekly wage packet, on which he so much relied for his pleasures. Docilely, she always handed her earnings to him. He spent the money as he liked.

The only possible solution, he told her, was to find a foster mother for their child. That would release her for wage earning. At first, this suggestion greatly upset her. But, he harped on the idea, insistently, reminding her of their economic struggles, so that soon, but against her real feelings, she agreed to let the child be boarded out. Always, even before their marriage, she let him organise her life, say what she would do, spend her money, and impose his will on her.

Accordingly, on June 15th, 1952, Mrs. Kilyen kissed her baby farewell. She had fed it shortly after dawn. Whereupon with a tender backward glance, her husband being still abed, she closed the door of their lodgings, and, at 6.30 a.m. that morning, reported back for duty at Prestwich Hospital. Kilyen, as he promised her, intended later in the day to hand over the baby to its foster mother, a woman he knew in Salford, though unknown to her. Little Joseph's transfer was well provided for, materially. As a conscientious mother, she had knitted him many neat little garments, bought all essential linen, and she saw that her husband had a generous quota of baby foods to take with him. No doubt, as she busied herself with her kitchen chores, thoughts of the child's welfare never left her for one moment.

It was some relief when shortly after midday, Kilyen turned up at the hospital's kitchen entrance and asked for her. 'It's all right,' he said. 'I've taken the baby to the woman in Salford. She'll look after him very well. Don't worry any more.'

'But where is he? Who's caring for him? What's the address?' Neither then nor afterwards, when she got back home, would he answer these questions. It did not matter how hard she pressed

him or pleaded with him. As day after day, he refused her the slightest news of their child, she became tormented and fearful. How she craved for some positive information. 'Is he well?' 'Have you seen him?' 'When can I see him?' And so forth. Her questions, taut and tearful, grew in persistence as her anxiety increased. But to all her entreaties he was unyielding.

'It's not good for you to know where he is,' he told her, 'for if I let you know, you're sure to want to go and see him. That will unsettle baby Joseph. He's best left alone.'

But, if Baby Kilyen was somewhere in peace, his mother's heart ached in despair. For a month she endured, with gradually deadening spirit, this frustration, and the feeling of foreboding inseparable from it.

On Thursday, July 17th, she collected and brought home from the hospital her outstanding maternity allowance, £23 4s 1d. It was not a 'benefit' paid to her under the National Health Scheme, but an allowance in lieu of wages which were due to her from the hospital. Misguidedly, she handed over the whole sum to her husband. Actually, on two occasions, before she went back to work, he had personally approached the hospital's wages clerk, and asked why this allowance had not been paid. However, this generous 'gift' to him gave her the right, she felt, to question him even more determinedly about her baby. Suddenly, her wet eyes raised and hands clenched, she spoke her mind, which was to frighten him into telling her the truth.

'I must know where Joseph is,' she challenged. 'If you won't tell me, I'll go to the police. They will soon find out.'

This threat enraged him.

'Well,' he stormed back at her, 'I can't tell you where he is. If you want to know the truth, I gave him away to a man and woman with a car.'

Mrs. Kilyen's anguish can be imagined. Not only had Imre betrayed her trust, but he had lost her child. That was the truth though, as later events proved, a far more appalling interpretation darkened it.

Sheer habit forced her to leave their rooms at 6.10 a.m. on Friday, July 18th, and knuckle down to her chores again, still dazed, in fact almost stupefied by this shock. Another blow awaited her when she got home. Her husband was missing. He

had left her no word. But he had taken most of his clothing, all her money, some little keepsakes, and his rucksack.

Bewildered more than ever by this additional shock she either dared not, or had not the energy to go to the police. Happily her sister, a woman less readily overawed by disaster, lived close by, and next day, Birute confided in her. 'We must tell the English police,' advised the sister directly. Somehow police, to Mrs. Kilyen's mind, implied contact with formidable personages—men to be feared and avoided, and torn as she was between her maternal anxiety and loyalty to her husband, her dilemma was a cruel, action nullifying one. The sister's will prevailed.

So, on the evening of July 19th, when the two sisters reported at Prestwich Police Station, the Lancashire police heard for the first time of the missing alien, Imre Kilyen, and his missing child. By this time, the Hungarian D.P., wherever he was hiding, had almost two complete days start of the law.

He was to be found at once. The Lancashire police, too, began to search for baby Kilyen. The wife's anxiety, alone, afforded no proof of her husband's culpability. In fact the only charge, then actionable against him, was that, as an alien, he had failed to register a change of address. Yet, although Imre Kilyen was circulated as 'wanted' for this breach of the Aliens Order, his photograph was also circulated via the *Police Gazette* and *Police Reports* to all stations in the country. Normally, in such circumstances, there is no need to distribute a picture, but Kilyen's disappearance had unusually grave suspicions attached to it.

In their efforts to trace the lost baby, the local police visited and questioned scores of women in Prestwich, Salford and neighbouring towns who, as known foster mothers, dry or wet nurses, might have accepted care of the child. In industrial districts, hereabouts, it is not uncommon for young working mothers to entrust their babies to older women or women who are home-tied but glad of the little extra money brought in by such responsibilities. But it is not normal for girls, however hard pressed, to park their babies on substitute mothers, registered foster parents or otherwise, then lose touch immediately with their children, and pay nothing for their maintenance. Moreover if, after agreeing to look after a baby, its new 'mother' found the child's maintenance money cut off, she would surely return it.

These inquiries, conducted with routine efficiency, yielded only one piece of information but that was significant. A woman acquaintance of Kilyen's said he had told her he had handed over baby Joseph to Birute's sister. Suspicion deepened.

Something sinister was feared, too, because when Kilyen fled, he left behind an overcoat from the pockets of which the police removed the baby's identity card and ration book. For fifteen years, until indeed the summer of 1954, mothers in Great Britain had to produce a child's ration book to get its special milk allowances and vital bone and flesh-forming foodstuffs. Who, then, would accept care of another person's child without this document?

On July 22nd, first trace of Kilyen's tracks arrived. Information reached the Lancashire County Constabulary's C.I.D. that a man answering to Imre Kilyen's name and description had embarked at Folkestone on the SS. *Canterbury* for Boulogne at 11 a.m. on July 19th. The Special Branch officer, stationed at the port, who discovered this fact, had wisely, on receiving Kilyen's circulation, checked back through his passenger sailing lists. Otherwise Kilyen's flight might have passed undetected for much longer. As it was, he had, apparently, left the country some hours even before Mrs. Kilyen brought her troubles to the police.

The fugitive had papers enough to get through British Immigration control. At Boulogne, however, his wits were tested. The French authorities refused him leave to land. Perhaps something about his face repelled them, or they disliked the idea of yet another D.P. roaming, uncurbed, through France. So back to the SS. *Canterbury* he had to go.

Shortly afterwards, an officer visited the ship just to assure himself that Kilyen had complied with this order. He should have kept the Hungarian D.P. in sight. For Kilyen, exercising his foxiness, had returned as ordered, left his haversack on board, and then sneaked off down an unguarded gangway. Thereafter, it seems, he avoided notice in the Port of Boulogne, escaped through its barriers, and took a fresh breath of freedom's not always balmy air. He had few resources, but astutely, before leaving England, he changed some of Birute's maternity allowance into a wristlet watch, and other small articles, so, as a counter to currency troubles abroad, he had something he could sell if desperate for food or lodging.

A slippery customer! Yet, in shaking off one nation's police, Imre Kilyen called down on his head, though he probably never suspected it, many new packs of experienced man hunters. Convinced now that their man was hiding somewhere abroad, the Chief Constable of Lancashire, Colonel T. E. St Johnston, decided to contact British Interpol at New Scotland Yard. He personally put the problem before Mr. (now Sir) Ronald Howe. On July 25th, therefore, the Yard radioed the International Bureau, giving details of the missing man, and requesting a general search circulation for him. So Imre Kilyen, his photograph embodied in the document, was 'posted' to all Interpol stations.

Meanwhile, such is the thoroughness of modern criminal investigation, efforts to locate Kilyen still continued in Britain. In the haversack he abandoned at Boulogne, the French authorities found a diary, in which he had scribbled down the names of various friends and acquaintances he had met in Britain during his E.V.W. hostel meanderings in England and Wales. He had entered, too, some Continental names and addresses.

The British police inquired for Kilyen in all areas, over which his job-swapping tracks had run. They looked up each one of his known acquaintances. Interpol's search notices, in their turn, directed special attention to the Continental addresses left scattered throughout his notebook.

Would every country extend its police resources, regardless of cost to the exchequer, on behalf of an alien girl apparently deserted by her alien husband? Might not his exit, that of an undesirable character, be treated as a matter of good riddance, of a 'bad hat' it was not in the national interest to recover? If such considerations counted, anyone, hopeful of promoting reasonable standards of good citizenship in his own or any other country, should reach for his sword and redouble his crusading efforts.

Aliens, domiciled in Britain, are just as much entitled to the protection of British law as any British-born citizen. A British child, too, was missing. And the International Bureau, politically disinterested, is also scrupulously non-discriminatory in nationality, as it probes and seeks, informs and warns the national central bureaux of member states in its efforts to promote the discovery of 'wanted' persons.

Several weeks passed before Imre Kilyen was heard of again.

Nor, despite widespread publicity given in Lancashire to Kilyen's missing baby, and the unrelaxing police efforts to find it, did one clue to its whereabouts materialise.

Then, on Saturday, September 13th, British Interpol at New Scotland Yard broke the silence. Receiving its information from the International Bureau, Paris, in turn informed by Interpol, Hamburg, the Yard now told the Lancashire C.I.D. that a person of Kilyen's name and description was detained in Rebdorf Prison, Germany. Committed there, on a charge of vagrancy and illegal entry, he was due for release the message stated, on September 17th—in four days' time. The Yard then advised the Lancashire C.I.D. to make contact with Hamburg 'who wait your instructions'. Considerable time was lost as attempts were made to discover exactly who, in Hamburg, awaited instructions. Contact by telephone both with the German police and the British Military authorities failed to trace anyone conversant with the Kilyen case. Fruitless inquiry thus absorbed the whole of Saturday afternoon; researches, renewed on Sunday morning, fared no better. So, in view of these week-end perplexities, the Lancashire C.I.D. requested British Interpol to verify the Hamburg message.

On Monday morning, September 15th, confirmation was received. The new message, blessedly more specific, said that a man, believed identical to the Imre Kilyen, 'wanted' by the British police, was serving a prison sentence of one month, but due to be freed, on September 17th, at Rebdorf, Eichstätt, Bavaria.

There was no time to lose, in fact hardly time enough to win, to use a cricketer's plaint. So, on Colonel St Johnston's instructions, two officers of the C.I.D. Detective Chief Inspector (now Divisional Superintendent) Robert McCartney and Detective Sergeant Harold Hurtle, made ready to fly to Bavaria, identify the said Imre Kilyen and, if he was their man, to find out what he had done with his baby. They entrained that afternoon for London. At Scotland Yard, a special document was handed them. Issued by the Federal German Republic's Consulate General, it attested to their identity, and defined the object of their mission. They then caught the Munich bound B.E.A. airliner at Northolt early on Tuesday morning. The plane stopped at Düsseldorf for

passport control, but landed them in excellent time and after an eventless flight at Munich airport at 1.30 p.m. (German time). As pre-arranged, officers of the Bavarian Landpolizei (County Police) met them, and drove them to the Präsidium (Police H.Q.) in Munich, where they went immediately into conference with senior German police officials and legal authorities.

As far as was then certain—the strongest suppositions require proof—Imre Kilyen had committed a summary offence only. And, a mere infringement of the Aliens Order, as Dr. Vogel, the Federal Government's legal representative in Munich pointed out, was insufficient grounds to justify the man's extradition. Actually, at this time, no extradition treaty existed between the relatively new West German Government and the United Kingdom.

As the situation stood, in default of a more serious charge, Imre Kilyen would be released next morning. Moreover, although picked up destitute on a Bavarian road and jailed for one month for vagrancy and illegal entry into Germany, he would not, as is the practice in other countries, be repatriated on his release from prison. Thousands of illegal entrants swarmed over Western Germany. The revitalised, defeated nation's prisons could never hold them, if they were consistently arrested and punished on this charge.

Chief Inspector McCartney faced a critical problem. If the Kilyen in Rebdorf prison was his man, he would naturally prefer to interview him in Britain. Then anything he might say about his missing baby could be quickly verified. However, Hobson's choice was his, absolutely. He must interview Imre Kilyen in Rebdorf prison, trusting in his skill as a trained and highly competent investigator to discover grounds for a more serious and extraditable charge, always assuming that the Imre Kilyen, detained there, was the fugitive D.P. from Lancashire.

Accordingly late that afternoon, the two British police officers drove to Rebdorf, eighty miles north of Munich. The prison, a converted monastery, and former P.O.W. Camp, lay in wooded country; its setting was almost fairylike in sylvan peace, but little of that magic then enchanted the two officers.

The Prison Governor, understandingly, granted them full facilities for a private interview with the prisoner. So brought from his cell, unwarned and unprepared for any interview, Imre Kilyen

suddenly found himself in a plain, sparsely furnished room and opposite him two British police officers.

One glance at the prisoner settled Chief Inspector McCartney's initial anxiety. The sallow-faced, medium-built man before him, as his mental picture of Kilyen's photograph confirmed, was indisputably Birute Kilyen's fugitive husband.

For Kilyen, this dramatic encounter, so shattering to his poise, hit him with the raw force of a psychological shock. Until then, he expected his freedom in the morning. Only a few hours more sleep, then the open air again, and, if lucky, a fresh life for him as just another footloose refugee among tens of thousands. If his imagination had toyed with thoughts of his discharge, it was stilled now. 'This unnerving experience altered everything, his hopes, his fears, perhaps his very life.

At once, he admitted what neither police officer doubted—his identity. Then, hesitating only slightly—he spoke fluent English and German as well as his native tongue—he frankly told of what he had done. In brief, worried over money, so he said, his own earnings, and those of his wife, being insufficient to support a child, he had suffocated his baby, and given its body hidden burial.

That admission, he asked the detectives to believe, lifted a burden off his mind. 'My sense of guilt', he said, 'was beginning to trouble me. I couldn't keep, I knew, the crime to myself much longer.' He had, he explained, pressed the baby, face down, against its bedclothes until, as his nursing experience taught him, it was dead. He then put the body inside one of Birute's suitcases, carried it to a spinney, just off Phillip's Park Road, situated at the back of the hospital where Mrs. Kilyen worked, and buried it secretly beneath a tree. He did this, apparently, on the very morning when, upon resuming her domestic service at Prestwich Hospital, his wife had trusted him to hand over their baby to a foster mother in Salford. Perhaps, within a few minutes of furtively covering up that puny corpse, he was round at the hospital's kitchen entrance, assuring her that baby Joseph was in good hands.

His confession did more than relieve his own conscience. The two detectives breathed more freely. Their own skill, fair mindedness and character, I have no doubt, registered an immediate impact on the Hungarian D.P., in the face of which he sensed it was foolish to prevaricate, lie or in any way conceal the truth.

He helped them, too, by drawing in support of his confession a rough sketch map, on which he marked the spot where he had dug in his child. 'This plan, the outcome of a few second's reflection in a murderer's mind in faraway Bavaria, was grimly accurate. For when later the police 'digging party' went to the site, they discovered themselves in thick, leafy surroundings, but within a yard of the spot, where the first spade struck, they found what they sought. Without Kilyen's sketch, it is improbable that tangible evidence of his crime would ever have emerged. The child's body, buried about one and a half feet down, was badly decomposed. He did not bury it horizontally, but at an angle. Some small hand-knitted woollics, including cap and vest, in which it was dressed, were identified by its mother and aunt as their work.

The two detectives now had to arrange for Kilyen's detention in Germany, until extradition formalities were completed, to permit them to escort him back to England. But, the German authorities being powerless, despite this development, to detain him beyond the morning, when his vagabond sentence expired, they arranged for him to be taken to Munich and held in an American military cell.

To lubricate the extradition machinery was, in this case, a formidable task. Consultations with the British consular representative, German jurists and officials of the 'occupying' American administration finally showed the way. But first the Americans decided to convene an extradition board. Its function was to examine Chief Inspector McCartney and Kilyen. The Board desired, originally, to bring both men together in front of one examining attorney.

However, as Chief Inspector McCartney, quickly explained, under English law, once he had obtained a signed voluntary statement from a prisoner—a statement given after the usual caution—he had no right whatever to cross-examine him on any point of it, nor to listen to anyone else doing so, outside a court of Justice. To overcome this objection, the Americans appointed two examining attorneys, one to question the detective, and the other, the confessed murderer.

More delays followed, as the Allied High Commission's Extradition Board at Bonn considered these reports. The Commission

alone, it appeared, under its instruments of occupation, had authority to authorise an extradition under such peculiar circumstances as this case created. Finally, on Saturday, September 20th, the Board, having reached its decision, sent an officer to Munich who handed Detective Chief Inspector McCartney a warrant of arrest, stamped with its mandate, so authorising him to take Kilyen into custody and remove him to England.

The fact of it being impossible to book seats for three on a plane leaving for Britain, before Monday morning, allowed the detectives to enjoy a few hours of well-deserved relaxation. Their hosts, German police officers, delighted in opening their minds to some of the loveliness of Bavaria. In fact, this incompleted week-end's sightseeing so fired the enthusiasms of one at least of these officers that before many more summers die on us, he intends to transport his family there for a real holiday.

Flying back to London, and travelling by car from the metropolis through the night to Lancashire, the detectives arrived at Prestwich Police Station in the early hours of Tuesday, September 23rd, 1952, with their prisoner. That same day, baby Kilyen's remains were discovered. The usual formalities followed. After being brought before the local Magistrates' Court, Kilyen was remanded, committed for trial, and transferred to Strangeways Gaol.

Charged with the murder of his child before Mr. Justice Jones at Manchester Assizes on December 11th, 1952, Kilyen pleaded 'Not Guilty'. His wife, exercising her right under an ancient English statute, elected not to give evidence against him. For his part, he departed from the statements in his signed confession to say that after he had nursed the child in an attempt to stop it crying, he threw it onto the bed, and when he picked it up again he found that it was suffocated. The jury, however, felt no doubt about his guilt as the author of a carefully premeditated murder. Accordingly, with a guilty verdict, Mr. Justice Jones, black capped, passed sentence of death.

However, on December 28th, 1952, the Queen's Mercy intervened, which meant Kilyen's sentence was commuted to one of life imprisonment or detention 'during the Queen's pleasure' as the archaic but honoured phrase runs.

In retrospect, the British officers look back on their dash to

Bavaria as a valuable experience, proof, if they needed it, of that spirit of free-masonry which exists among policemen of all nations. And, though they travelled, with weighty thoughts, due to their lack of evidence against the suspected child murderer, such tensions perhaps helped to increase their capacity for enjoyment later on.

Much of the procedure abroad was new to them. As a police officer, schooled in the British tradition, Chief Inspector McCartney never accustomed himself to reading next morning, in the German press, a full account of his day's activities, leading up to Kilyen's identification, confession, arrest and extradition.

'Two Scotland Yard Detectives wait outside Rebdorf Prison Gate' said one headline. 'Alien Confesses to Child Murder in Britain as Economic Necessity', said another report. All detectives, from whatever part of England they may originate, rate in Continental eyes as Scotland Yard officers. Perhaps, high-selling writers of detective fiction inculcate the belief that only 'Yard' men ever travel abroad. But that popular fallacy, if flattering to some members of Britain's borough and County Police Forces, causes others to flutter their eyebrows. The country is proud of its non-regionalised, and non-nationalised police forces, and their efficiency can stand comparison with the best.

Apart from its distinctive merit as a fine example of detective work, the Kilyen case deserves for other reasons an historic place in Interpol's story. Seldom had a British county police force, as opposed to Scotland Yard, used Interpol's resources to search for and discover a fugitive murderer. It is unusual, also, for a prisoner to be extradited from a foreign country, with whose Government Britain had, at that time, no extradition treaty. And the case made history for the Lancashire County Constabulary.

For, on several occasions, the Allied High Commission's Extradition Board at Bonn asked Chief Inspector McCartney if it would be possible for him to say that there was a warrant in force in England for Kilyen's arrest on the charge of murder. Chief Inspector McCartney telephoned his superior officer at Hutton in Lancashire. This officer (Detective Chief Superintendent C. N. Lindsay) who had from the outset of the Kilyen case directed the police inquiries, arranged for an information to be laid before the Manchester County Magistrates for the capital offence. Such is

the law's jargon! So, for the first time in the Lancashire County Constabulary's history, its officers possessed a warrant authorising their arrest of an individual for murder. Murder is ordinarily the most serious of felonies. Police officers do not need warrants, therefore, when apprehending for this crime.

True, one aspect of the case provokes less favourable comment. Why, one must ask, since Kilyen was arrested in Bavaria on August 14th, was news of his detention kept from the British authorities until September 13th, merely four days before his release? And, before this information solved the problems of time, space and legal procedure, less than twelve hours divided Kilyen from freedom.

However, justice is often served, even in this iconoclastic age, by seemingly miraculous interventions. Had Kilyen bothered to alter his name after his return to Germany, he might have passed off unnoticed. Had he insisted, when the British detectives interviewed him in Rebdorf, that he had given his child away to someone in Prestwich or Salford, someone he did not know—and then said no more—they could not have forestalled his release next day.

So long as he kept out of fresh trouble, avoided the United Kingdom (he had at one time dallied with the idea of emigrating to Canada), and provided the burial of his baby was never discovered, as there was little reason it should, he would be free. But between the criminal act and escape from that act, there lies a bridge, upon which providential shafts often flicker, demolishing the ifs and ands, so enabling justice to take its course through a kind of compassionate dispensation when the threads of inquiry are the slenderest. That, perhaps, is the moral of Imre Kilyen's defiance of the law, and the law's aerial dash to intercept his dawning freedom.

CHAPTER NINE

NO REVEILLE FOR RONALD CHESNEY

Great criminals bear about them a kind of predestination which makes them surmount all obstacles, which makes them escape all dangers, up to the moment which a wearied Providence has marked as the rock of their impious fortunes.

DUMAS, *The Three Musketeers*

OUTSTANDING criminals of British origin earn their notoriety as a rule on home soil. Language difficulties, quite as much as the insular temperament, explain why few Britons figure as leaders or even as members of Continental gangs, and when a miscreant does occupy himself with crime abroad on a grandiose scale he is usually the lone-wolf trafficker. Exceptions merely emphasise the truth underlying these generalisations.

But it is with an exception I am concerned here, John Donald Merrett or Ronald John Chesney, to use the name by which he was better known, born in New Zealand at Levin on North Island on August 17th, 1908. That happy country cannot be held responsible for his upbringing. For the United Kingdom was fated to educate him at one of her most famous public schools. Afterwards, his devoted mother sent him to Edinburgh University where his academic career lasted precisely six weeks.

Of heavy build, six feet tall, with fresh complexion, brown hair, grey eyes and pierced ears, he fitted well the common epithet applied to him of 'swashbuckler'. When not a fugitive, he favoured a neatly cut beard—a small pencil moustache was the alternative guise—but in few circumstances did he conceal his taste for brightly coloured clothes, best expressed by gaily knitted waist-

coats or cardigans, green or some other garish-coloured corduroys, a bow tie and grey leather shoes. In his left ear, a gold ear-ring, acting as talisman to his studied poise of wealth, unorthodoxy and vanity, completed the popular picture of him as a modern buccaneer to his polished fingertips. And buccaneer he was in fact as in style. But unlike many mere braggarts, he held his roisterous spirits in check when needed by exercise of a cool brain, a calculating eye for weighing hazards and an almost inhuman precision in executing his plans.

He had intellectual gifts, never properly used, gifts such as many honest men, born of good yeoman stock, never attain, and linguistically he was well endowed. For he spoke French and German fluently; in addition, he had a working knowledge of Arabic, Spanish and Egyptian.

Such a man does well in War, so long as Service discipline keeps him straight, and audacious exploits lard his ego. And Lieutenant-Commander Ronald Chesney, R.N.V.R., engaged in special service operations in the Mediterranean, showed the stuff of heroes. He last commanded the yacht, *Kheyr-el-Dine*, when Rommel's tanks burst into Tobruk and set about blasting the British M.T.B.'s and other craft as these little ships struggled in the harbour to evacuate troops from the blazing jetties. Chesney had just seen ninety-seven soldiers pile aboard his boat and was running for it when a German Mark IV tank, firing over open sights, crashed shells into the yacht's frail timbers. She began to sink. A neighbouring M.T.B., putting out a smokescreen, gallantly drew up alongside and took off all troops. But Chesney stood firm. He refused to leave. It seemed that he preferred a hero's death, in the best naval tradition, sooner than abandon a doomed vessel. Had he died then, and why he did not, no-one knows, his name would not be dishonoured now. Instead, the inimical fate, before whose chariots individual destiny is sometimes strangely scourged, spared him from being blown to pieces. Taken prisoner, he was put into a P.O.W. camp in Italy, noted for its toughness, but he got away.

Yet, in spite of these virtues, a foretaste of his qualities as an international crook sullied his youth. His public school scrapes, not very honest ones, paled before the trouble he brought upon himself, when, in 1926, as an eighteen-year-old student at Edin-

burgh University he lived with his mother in a flat in Buckingham Terrace. She had an income of £700 a year, which enabled her to live, not perhaps lavishly, but as a well-to-do middle-class woman, proud of her boy, and able to provide him with a comfortable home in a good residential area as well as subsidise his studies. She hoped he would carve out a distinguished career for himself, possibly in the Diplomatic Corps. He had brains, she knew, and could use his hands. But life's seamy side, especially its voluptuousness, easily ensnared his will. Perhaps too much indulged as a boy by a doting mother, he indulged his own fancies at every turn. And one day he walked into the kitchen, perfectly composed, and told the maid, 'Mother's shot herself'.

Those summoned for aid thought similarly. Removed to the Ward at the Royal Infirmary, set apart for suicides, Mrs Merrett lingered there for fourteen days, delirious for most of the time because of the bullet lodged in her brain. She made a number of statements, the gist of which was to dissociate herself from any suicidal attempt. But as they were the statements of a dying person, believed to be a suicide, no great weight was attached to them.

Yet, soon afterwards, the police discovered a chain of facts which put, in their view, a very different interpretation on this drawing-room drama. His mother, exercising Scottish frugality, had allowed him ten shillings a week pocket money, but since this thwarted him as a gay lad who wanted to fête Edinburgh's dance club hostesses, he started forging cheques in her name. Perhaps she voiced her disappointment in him or showed alarm over his profligate habits. For, to put it briefly, instead of studying he was wenching, and using stolen money for his pleasures. Yet, if one to whom he owed much provoked him or stood in his path, he was not the sort of person, even as a pudgy-faced, bespectacled student, to hesitate to advance his own interests.

Brought for trial before the Lord Justice Clerk, Lord Alness, on charges of murdering his mother and uttering forged cheques in her name, he became overnight the most controversial figure in Scotland, pitied and adored by some, contemptuously regarded by others. Few cases in Scottish legal history provoked so sharp a conflict in the medico-legal evidence.

The distinguished Scottish expert, Professor Harvey Littlejohn, put forward the view to the court's scarcely concealed excitement

that 'suicide was in the highest degree improbable'. He described his experiments with the pistol, relating them to the condition of the flesh round the wound.

But, as witness for the defence, Sir Bernard Spilsbury, the eminent pathologist, or Dr. Bernard Spilsbury as he then was—for years the most scientific witness heard in British Courts—held contrary opinions. The position and direction of the wound, he thought, were not inconsistent with the theory of suicide. For, as he demonstrated, a pistol could be fired close to one's left ear without contorting the left arm. He agreed also that women, as counsel for the defence had already remarked, were generally more flexible in moving their shoulder joints than men. So athletic an advantage, it was considered, derived from the feminine habit, then very much the vogue, of putting up the hair! To-day, perhaps, greater austerity, not in hair styles, but in the wealth of hair available, possibly diminishes this advantage.

Chiefly owing to this disagreement of experts, the jury returned a majority verdict in Chesney's favour. So, as Scottish law requires, he was acquitted of his mother's murder by a verdict of 'Not Proven'. But, on the count of forging cheques in her name, he was sentenced to a year's imprisonment.

So unpromising a start in life is seldom redeemed. But while in court, his disinterestedness in the proceedings—he affected an air of total apathy—earned him the heartfelt sympathy of one woman in the public gallery. In her eyes, he had the aura of a poor boy caught in the toils of some hideous and unmerited complicity. She befriended him and, when he was released from prison, provided for him at her Bexhill residence in Sussex. There, her sixteen year old daughter, Isobel Veronica, or Vera, as everyone called her—an attractive girl—soon felt that this cruelly misjudged but capable youth was the one man for her. He reciprocated her feelings by running away with her and marrying her. But since he had neither money nor the will to earn it honestly, he quickly fell back on the one medium he invariably found useful in any emergency—crime. By passing worthless cheques, he 'bought' his girl wife jewellery, clothes and other articles he fancied.

Though put again into prison, he accepted his punishment lightly, for he felt no inducement to exert himself, knowing that

when he reached the age of twenty-five, he would inherit a substantial portion of an £80,000 trust fund left by his grandfather. How readily do legacies demoralise the undeserving. Sure of this windfall, he stayed idle and cock-a-hoop.

When the money, over £60,000, was paid to him, he bought a yacht, the thirty-seven year old ex-Bristol Channel boat, the *Gladys May*, and sailed her single-handed to Gibraltar, where with his wife, his mother-in-law, the self-styled 'Lady' Mary Menzies, and their adopted boy and girl (he treated these children kindly) he proposed to spend the rest of his life sailing in the sunshine.

Yet able now to indulge his extravagant tastes to their topmost ceiling, Chesney outdid Dr. Jekyll in the obliquity of his under-hand dealings and showed far greater heartiness than Mr. Hyde in his relish of life's bounty. For while as a bon viveur he threw lavish parties on his yacht or gambled with indifference to his stiff losses at Mediterranean casinos, himself the gurgling Gargantua at every spree, he kept himself in funds by a wide variety of nefarious activity. Two qualities served him well, as he plied his subterranean trade, a steely nerve in danger and rare skill in handling a small boat. He was master of a yacht or launch however rough the sea.

Although suspected of double dealing, of being more than a poseur in smuggling affairs, he was never caught. He ran arms from Casablanca and Algiers into Spain, so trading on the cry for weapons caused by the Spanish Civil War. Or, as a diversion, he shipped Indian hemp from Greek and Aegean ports, dropping it off at Djibouti in Somaliland, from where his agents smuggled it into Egypt with good profits for every conspirator in the racket.

Yet, this gambler, a piratical thug at heart, finally found himself with a hand too red to play. After his distinguished war service, he began to pay the penalty for his inherent sense of evil doing. In November 1946, he was sentenced by a Naval District Court Martial at Hamburg to four months imprisonment on charges of stealing a service car and petrol, a sentence he served in Chelmsford. In November 1947, a Paris Court fined him 150,000 francs and sentenced him to four months imprisonment for using a false name and making a fraudulent entry into France. Next year, he was re-convicted in Paris, charged with currency trafficking, im-

prisoned for a year and fined 500,000 francs. But he still courted trouble.

In April 1949, he was sentenced by a Brussels Court to four months imprisonment for aiding and abetting the illegal entry and sojourn of a German national into Belgium, but after serving a month, he appealed, was released, and deported. In May, the Marlborough Street Magistrates Court sent him to prison for three months and fined him £250, having convicted him of unlawfully dealing in uncustomed goods (222 pairs of nylon stockings). Then, at Lewes, in April 1951, he was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment on each of two charges of attempting to export £98 in notes and a quantity of coffee beans from New-haven. Again, in June 1952, he was condemned in Brussels, fined 1,000 francs (Belge) and imprisoned for a month on a charge of aiding a foreigner to reside illegally in Brussels. No wonder his C.R.O. file was one of the bulkiest ever.

Finally, without any money at all, he planned the perfect murder. It might be said that he had planned it as an eighteen-year-old student and preserved his neck.

His wife now stood in the way of his marriage to a so-called ravishing, blue-eyed young German blonde, Sonia Winnikes. He felt tempestuously attracted to her. His wife also possessed a capital fund of about £8,500, the marriage settlement he had made over to her from his grandfather's estate. Her death would release that. When in prison in England, and also in Verviers Prison, Belgium, he sounded fellow convicts as to their readiness to bump off his wife. He offered a Belgian crook 100,000 francs if he would go to London, and run her down, 'accidentally', with a car. All refused his infamous offers. So, desperation and his own callousness drove him to arrange the 'accident' himself.

Chesney worked out his plot with the detail of a Commando operation. After taking a hotel room in Amsterdam, he flew to London on the night of February 10th, 1954, and, under cover of darkness, sneaked into the old people's home in Montpelier Road, Ealing, where his wife lived with his mother-in-law. He then drowned her, as he had planned, in her bath. But, his alibi miscarried. His mother-in-law, it must be assumed, saw him, and she paid with her life for her chance discovery, but only after a maddeningly grim struggle for, despite her seventy-two years,

she was wiry and, as the police believe, resisted him with the greatest determination. He then tidied up everything, including the furniture and carpets in the room, in which this life and death struggle had taken place, and removed all fingerprints from the bathroom where his wife lay dead. That last 'precaution' nullified any suggestion that she might have committed suicide. In fact, his double murder was riddled with flaws.

The final dark chapter to it, from the official viewpoint, was written on March 24th, 1954, when at Ealing, a Coroner's jury of eleven, all men, decided after hearing the police evidence that the suicide, Ronald John Chesney, alias Merrett, alias Milner, had murdered his wife, Isobel Veronica and his mother-in-law, Mrs. Mary Menzies, at their Montpelier Road home, where, five weeks earlier, their bodies had been found.

Meanwhile, directly the double murder was discovered on February 11th, New Scotland Yard's Interpol Room set out to trace the whereabouts of Ronald Chesney; his record alone, apart from his personal relationship to the victims, stamped him as possibly the most dangerous and ruthless international criminal of British stock yet raised. And, while the search which thus began failed to end in a dramatic arrest, it provided a good demonstration of that thoroughness in investigation, authority in the deduction of evidence, and painstaking concentration upon every relevant line of inquiry, so frequently exemplified by the Yard's officers during a murder hunt.

As an immediate precaution, Scotland Yard issued its 'All Port Warning'. By this drill, every port and airport in the United Kingdom is furnished with a description of the wanted man and instructions to detain him at sight. But Chesney, flying with a forged passport under another man's name, had already slipped through the net. Yet fate, whatever fate had guarded him so far, was becoming hostile. To substantiate his alibi, he needed to be back that morning in his hotel bedroom at Amsterdam. Instead, owing to fog, the K.L.M. aircraft, Flight No. K.L.M. 118, on which he was a passenger, was diverted to Dusseldorf, landing there at 11.35 a.m. (German time) on February 11th, 1954. He then faced the prospect of continuing his journey to Amsterdam by motor coach, a six hour ride. Several fellow passengers noticed how agitated he was. Had it been necessary, they could have

sworn later to his identity, even though he travelled under a false name, and had shaved off his beard. He was frustrated again when at the German-Dutch border, the German passport control authorities required him to fill in a card, giving details of his passport and his journey—a formality not asked for by the Dutch. That card with its incriminating handwriting, was afterwards sent to the Registration Bureau, Ministry of the Interior, at Kaiserplatz, Bonn.

The Yard knew well his many associations with Germany. After the war, he had served with the Royal Navy in Hamburg, then with the Control Commission, and in between various prison spells, had put his hand to some Anglo-German export business, using it as a cover, possibly, for criminal activities. He co-habited, also, with a German girl whom he had rescued, so she said, from the Russian Zone, where she was wanted on a charge of assassinating a Russian soldier.

In its efforts, therefore, to trace Chesney, the Yard informed Interpol, Wiesbaden, of two addresses in Cologne, complete with telephone numbers, where Chesney might be found. One address was the home of the girl he desired to marry, the blond night-club hostess, Sonia Winnikes of Düren.

The certainty of an unavoidable Nemesis seized now the mind of this twentieth-century buccaneer-killer, the man his war-time colleagues nicknamed 'Crasher', but who through pursuit of some evil star had blotted out the good qualities that flickered occasionally from his huckstering personality. He knew and disliked prison life. He had escaped the rope once. But now, he must have visualised it, swinging melodramatically ahead of him. And he was, he realised, too conspicuous a man to hide.

He tried without success to bid farewell for ever to Sonia Winnikes. It was towards 11 p.m. on the night of February 15th, when he knocked on the door of her father's grocery shop in Düren, above which she lived. He was not admitted. The girl's father, a man of some discernment, disliking his daughter's liaison with Chesney, drove him away. He picked on a wooded stretch just outside Cologne and if, for an instant, the circumstances of his mother's death haunted him, the ironic fates must have felt well satisfied as he placed his pistol inside his mouth and fired.

The first news to reach the Yard that their quarry was perhaps

no longer alive arrived next morning via a radio transmission from Interpol, Wiesbaden. From this it was learnt that early that morning, a male corpse had been found on the outskirts of Cologne shot through the head in a manner clearly suggestive of suicide. The bullet, fired through the mouth, went out leftwards behind the head. A U.S. colt pistol lay nearby. From the body's clothing the police took a British passport No. 284539 in the name of John Donald Milner; inside it was a scrap of paper signed Milner on which he had scribbled a message in German, nominating Fräulein Sonia Winnikes as his sole heir. As a further aid to identification, the German police then proposed to transmit pictures of the body and passport by T.V. direct from Cologne to Scotland Yard, London.

On this evidence, alone, the police could not be sure that the man they were anxious to interview, Chesney, Merrett or Milner, was in fact now dead, his body lying in Cologne mortuary. But if caution be a wise counsellor, it probably was! The German police, after carrying out an autopsy, as required by their law, next asked Scotland Yard for disposal instructions. And Detective Superintendent Daws, in charge of the case, went at once to Cologne, taking with him Detective Sergeant Chadburn, to identify the corpse, and gain proof, if it was available, of Chesney's guilt as the Ealing double murderer.

Meanwhile, in its next radio message to Interpol, Wiesbaden, the Yard specifically requested that all Chesney's clothing and personal effects should be carefully preserved, an analysis of his blood group made, and samples forwarded of hair from his head and body. The message asked, too, that any scratch marks, bruises or wounds, not related to the revolver shot, should be photographed in detail.

The reasons behind such thoroughness in a case of criminal identification accord with the routine pattern of every murder inquiry in Britain. Directly the victim of death by violence is discovered, police officers, assisted by laboratory specialists, are at pains to collect such vital data as the victim's blood group, the blood group of any other blood-stains detected at the site or on his person or clothing. Finger-nail deposits are examined, too, for fibres and any such evidence as they may accumulate in a struggle, while the victim is clawing at his adversary. The body

with its clothing is examined minutely for superfluous traces, such as hairs, mudstains, blood-marks, bits of torn wool stuffs, and other tell-tale remnants. All is preserved and catalogued.

Human hairs, when brought under the microscope, in a forensic laboratory, can be magnified up to 160 times life size, until in fact they assume the thickness of strands of rope, whereupon the individual peculiarities of hair, its consistency, sheen, colouring, and quality of the core, stand out with startling clarity.

And, thanks to the laboratory's help, this murder case was brilliantly closed. Superintendent Daws had no difficulty in identifying Chesney. He discovered, too, conspicuous marks of bruises and scratches on his forearms and hands. Pictures of these, taken by a colour process for emphasis, helped to convince the Court of Chesney's participation in a life and death struggle. But, it was the researches of Dr. L. C. Nickolls, Director of the Metropolitan Police Laboratory, which left no doubt at all in the jury's mind about Chesney's murderous visit to Montpelier road.

Examining the finger-nail deposits of the dead man, Dr. Nickolls found embedded therein fragments of pink wool fibres, not inconsistent with the wool from the jumper worn by Mrs. Menzies at the time of her death. From Chesney's cardigan, he identified hairs similar to the hairs of her head, and also a number of dog hairs, similar to the hairs of the two Chows she kept. Moreover, on her own clothing, the laboratory expert identified hairs which were similar, in his view, to those of Chesney.

As soon as this formidable criminal was circulated, Continental police forces delved into their records of his activities. And, much fresh evil came to light. Chesney for a time associated with an international gang on the Continent engaged in drug trafficking. As their agent, he bought and sold cocaine in France, Norway and Denmark. He also converted a Commer van, and travelling under this alias and that, sometimes with dark horn-rimmed spectacles and a small moustache, he drove it as his personal caravan—in reality it was a smuggler's truck—to and fro across European frontiers. Thus he carried illicit supplies of nylons, arms, cigarettes, tobacco and coffee.

Through the German girl, whom he married bigamously, he tried to arrange for the import of large quantities of mercury from the Soviet Zone to dispose of, on black markets in the west, at

fantastic profit. But, the Russians' tight grip on their zone stopped this plot. He had, too, his own yacht, kept sometimes in the Baltic, and sometimes at a channel port. As a contraband runner he was then, versatile, resourceful, and far-ranging.

One record, however, needs correction. In fairness to the British Control Commission, it should be clear that he joined it before his Naval Court martial at Hamburg and resigned from its Service when this faced him. The Commission did not recruit him, as the German police record suggested, after the Royal Navy had sentenced him to imprisonment.

Several former cronies of his, in Europe's underworld, refused, at first, to believe that he had committed suicide. One man, a German, with whom he had been imprisoned at Verviers, wrote to the Belgium Ministry of Justice in execrable French to say that Chesney seemed a man too fond of life to commit suicide. '*M'est apparu comme un homme qui aimait trop la vie pour attenter à ses jours.*' But Chesney the bandit and buccaneer embraced crime even in death, going down, it may be said, in his true colours.

Perhaps only a world war, accompanied by a chaotic aftermath, can create conditions in which a man of this calibre reaches his full stature of evil. Chesney seized full handed and with an agile planning brain the advantages presented to criminals by those conditions. But just as corruption satiates the human being engulfed in it, so it finally destroys him. Chesney was no exception to this universal law. A twofold murderer, most probably the murderer of his mother also, it is not for mortal man to leave anything except a loathsome memory after coldly killing those most entitled to his respect, shelter and protection.

In answer to the eternal 'Why?' behind human destiny, one must marvel at fate's patience and humour with this man, at the long run given him before suddenly that patience snapped.

CHAPTER TEN

ARTISTIC VENGEANCE

Everything, indeed, is good which is conceived with honesty and executed with communicative ardour.

R. L. STEVENSON

INTERNATIONAL criminals are seldom of so enigmatic a character as the Dutch artist-forgery, Han (Henricus, Anthonius) van Meegeren. It was in July 1945, while detained on a charge of collaborating with the Germans that, in order to relieve his nerves—he was a man, even as artists go, of highly strung temperament—he confessed to the forging of a number of famous paintings which were acclaimed and widely revered as the work of the seventeenth-century Dutch masters, Jan Vermeer of Delft and Pieter de Hoogh. Art circles over a world front, with distinguished critics in their forefront, reacted as if scorched by sudden fire. Connoisseurs who in their enthusiasm had greeted the discovery of one or other of the paintings in dispute as a masterstroke of genius, a glorious concept divinely executed or in language, far more original and high flown, knew not whether to defend their judgements or to creep into the shadows.

The public reacting keenly as ever to a scandal, delights no less to see experts confounded. And the repercussions provoked by this sensational feat or claim of perverted artistry, survive yet. Were or were not van Meegeren's claims true?

The most fulsomely praised of the Vermeers which he said he had falsified, the Disciples at Emmaüs, a picture which the Rembrandt Society helped to purchase at a price of 520,000 florins, is still believed by a few art experts to be the master's

work. Those, holding this view, claim that some of the scientific evidence deduced by the Commission of laboratory experts appointed by the Dutch legal authorities to examine van Meegeren's claims, erred on the side of dogmatism. A man like van Meegeren might easily, they feel, have found a genuine Vermeer and by certain tricks, which he knew would be discovered, given it the appearance of a fraud, and so brought off a double bluff.

As soon as it became known, the validity of this fine picture, and fine picture it undeniably is, was vouched for by the late Dr. A. Bredius, an internationally recognised Dutch art historian. He gave it his certificate of authenticity, and described its discovery and uniqueness in the *Burlington Magazine*. He also supported his testimony with the offer of a generous personal guarantee to the fund inaugurated for its purchase. During the several years the painting was exhibited in the *Boymans Museum*, Rotterdam, very few visitors contemplated it without a feeling of rare beauty, perhaps, too, of mysticism and reverence. For the depth and clarity of the painting, the delicacy of colouring, harmonious grouping of characters and religious aura, all merge into a Vermeerian unity. Here appeared the exactitude of genius and that unaging vitality it alone commands. 'The greatest of Vermeer's paintings' was the verdict of more than one art lover.

International criminals do not ordinarily leave the world in their debt. But if he had painted nothing else except this picture, van Meegeren must be credited with having bequeathed at least a startling enigma to posterity.

Initially, when he introduced the picture, its sale being negotiated by a third party, he explained that it was one of a small collection of Old Masters, retained for years as family heirlooms by a lady of Dutch origin, Mavroeke, he called her, who had married an Italian noble and lived beside Lake Como. Her collection included about eighty paintings with, as he could verify, some beautiful and forgotten works by Rembrandt, Vermeer, Hals, Terborgh and El Greco among them. But the lady, he hastened to add, was in trouble. She and her husband, suspected of anti-Fascist leanings, were apprehensive lest at any time they should be visited by Mussolini's secret police and clapped into an internment camp. So, because she wanted to raise funds in order to emigrate with her husband to America, she had entrusted

him with the responsibility of disposing of some of her more valuable paintings on a commission basis.

He was living then on the Côte d'Azur, and needed to exercise the greatest discretion. The Italian authorities, obviously, would not permit such rarities to leave the country. So, he had not only to smuggle out her heirlooms but to ensure also that his name was not mentioned in any subsequent negotiations for their sale. For the lady Mavroeke had been, he candidly admitted, a former lover of his, and once his part was discovered as an intermediary, her hopes of ever getting to America would be wrecked and his part of the bargain betrayed. So, the person who actually arranged the transaction, by which the Disciples at Emmaüs was sold, respected van Meegeren's plea for secrecy, and by a good sale earned a good commission. Well, how does that story stand up to examination? The lady Mavroeke was never traced and, if as seems probable, the whole tale was fictitious, it helped to prepare a romantic and plausible backcloth against which to introduce forgeries in the guise of 'Old Masters'.

What turned van Meegeren from a moderately competent artist, one in his youth hailed a painter of promise, into a fantastically impudent and successful faker? Born on October 10th, 1889, at Deventer, Holland, he studied first, on his father's advice, architecture at the Institute of Technology at Delft, but architecture, although it was his father's profession, bored him. Far more quickening to his imagination were drawing and painting. So he changed his studies and very soon began to excite attention as a water colourist. Critics predicted a future for him, especially after they had viewed and praised his water colour of the Interior of a Dutch Church. This study earned him in 1912 the gold medal for art awarded by the Institute of Technology at Delft. His style, modelled on the seventeenth-century Dutch school, was redolent of its simplicity, domestic intimacy and charm in the arrangement of colouring. He held numerous exhibitions, for he was a fast worker, and as he became singled out for exceptional praise, his head, it seemed, began to spin. Never a strong-minded man, or a man of robust character, he let things go in a painting sense and deserting the covenants of his creed, sought refuge in wine, and his morals, it was said, could never be described as commendable.

Hence, little by little, but inevitably, as his standards deteriorated, the critics found themselves more and more bound to voice their disappointment in his works. The culmination came in 1932 when his name was put forward as a candidate for the chairmanship of the Arts Club at The Hague. If he was elected, the honour would be a recognition of eminence. But voting was suspended. So, in a mood of violent embitterment, he left the Netherlands to settle in the South of France where he was determined, how he was not then perfectly sure, to work off his spite against his detractors.

Later his hate crystallised. 'Inferior painter, am I?' he said in effect. 'Very well, then, I will show the art critics, the self-appointed dilettanti, and all those æsthetic know-alls how vastly superior I am to their idea of me as a third-rater. I will produce paintings in the style of great masters, and produce them with such fidelity that the most discerning critics, my detractors now, will hail these works as those of immortals.'

Thus, to achieve this ambition, he turned himself into an international criminal, so graduating with a paint-brush into one of the most remarkable rogues ever paraded in any gallery of malefactors.

At his villa in the South of France, near Nice, unaided and practically alone (he refused to let even his wife watch him at work) and without models, he concentrated first on perfecting his art in the style of Vermeer so that he might better discharge his real business, that of creating fraudulent masterpieces in this painter's name. He had studied Vermeer, indeed the Dutch school, in most of Europe's leading art galleries from Munich to the National Gallery, London. He knew, too, precisely what qualities the critics would seek in an Old Master, apart from their æsthetic appraisal of the painting itself. He rummaged in art shops in Amsterdam and Paris, buying framed seventeenth-century canvases, the work of artists no-one admired. He then washed off their subject matter, not always completely, but obscuring the greater part of it, using soda and other solvents. This gave him canvases of exactly the right age on which to elaborate his impersonations.

Every great master, too, specialised in his own particular colouring media, and had favourite colours. With Vermeer, it is

his handling of the lapis lazuli, the famous ultra-marine blue, yellow and white, the first two colours marvellously blended in his paintings of 'A Young Girl', perhaps the most admired work at the Mauritshuis, The Hague, which, to the discerning eye, are visible signs of his genius. Van Meegeren also selected only pigments which were available during the lifetimes of those artists he planned to imitate.

Then, as the basis of his plot, he chose subjects which he knew would have appealed to Vermeer, and by confining his choice to subjects with a religious atmosphere, he hoped that he would even more thoroughly disconcert and hoax the critics, especially as in well-informed art circles, there existed a strong belief, something more than a legend, that many of Vermeer's paintings, religious in character, had been lost or mislaid, probably in Italy.

Most forgers are content to copy existing masterpieces or to copy, perhaps, a single segment of a classic, thereby isolating a figure or presentable study in it. Having forged the artist's signature, they then attempt, with others conniving, to pass off this drzen counterfeit as an original. For their conspiracy to succeed, they invariably need to find a gullible customer. Not so van Meegeren. For he, goaded by motives of vengeance or spite and his twisted mentality, entered a realm of deceit accessible only to a man of talent. He would create paintings, themselves original, but so wonderfully true in feeling and style to the master himself that ecstatic but inherently stupid critics would, unknowingly, applaud his work as they applauded only the cherished bygoners.

The paramount technical difficulty facing van Meegeren was the need to recreate on his canvases that crackled effect, due to a vast minutiae of tiny crevices characteristic of paint after it is well aged. Glance at any seventeenth-century work in your local art gallery. The criss-cross intersections of the crackle, true of no recognisable pattern, mark the entire face of the canvas. Thus, time's wear and tear is symbolised. Unless he could reproduce that effect, his pretences would be obvious.

So, with calculated subtlety, he mixed his paints with a synthetic resin which, upon hardening, developed very rapidly the desired crackle. Had he mixed his paints with oil, the practice of Vermeer and his school, van Meegeren would have had to hide his forgeries for at least one century before they could be passed off as originals.

But by using this resin, and folding the canvases after the paint had hardened, he achieved in a few days a convincing representation of time's handiwork over three centuries.

He appreciated no less astutely the difficulties to be overcome before presenting his paintings for critical estimation. But again, he hit on the right answer, a highly credible tale to account for their sudden appearance in the auction rooms, a tale, too, that avoided hint of his own hand in the affair, and he asked the right prices. Obviously, an authentic Vermeer or de Hoogh could not be sold for the proverbial song. It must realise a price normally reserved for classic paintings by this or the other master. So, whether he intended to do so originally or not, van Meegeren gained rewards by the sales of his forgeries quite beyond reach of the most prolific and successful painter of the day. This gave additional edge to his scorn and 'bite' to his vengeance. For wealth not only inflates a man's ego, but allows him to use that ego far more proudly for the discomfiture of those he wishes to hurt or humiliate.

In truth, the world might still be applauding van Meegeren's Vermeers as Vermeers straight from the master's brush, but for the considerable accident of the Second World War. For in May 1945, a young officer of the Netherlands Field Security Force interrogated a German agent whom he knew had negotiated the sale of a Vermeer to Goering during the occupation. The painting in question was 'The Woman Taken in Adultery'; the German said, without any beating about the bush, that he had bought it for 1,650,000 florins and understood that a painter called H. van Meegeren had had the luck to discover it and profit, in part or in whole, by this transaction. The picture, incidentally, was identified by Allied Museum and Fine Arts experts when examining Goering's treasures after their recovery from their war-time hiding place, a salt mine near Salzburg.

The Security Captain next visited van Meegeren, then living at No. 321 Keizersgracht, Amsterdam, and learned that the artist had indeed put the painting on the market. Because of that admission, he promptly arrested van Meegeren as a *collaborateur*. Indisputably, it is a serious offence, detrimental to a nation's interests, if any citizen sells secretly a painting by one of its masters to a foreign power, then deemed an enemy power, and to cap that

sale, gains a good profit for himself. There seemed no doubt that van Meegeren knew the 'Vermeer' would be bought eventually by Goering, and witnesses affirmed that he was anxious that the painting should leave Amsterdam for the Reichmarschall's collection without being viewed in the Netherlands.

If his arrest on this charge astonished van Meegeren, it was a mere bubble in a whirlpool to the astonishment he unleashed when on July 12th, 1945, he appeared for examination before a Dutch Court. Not only did he assert that the Goering picture was his work, but that a number of other 'Old Masters', discovered in the last decade, derived also from his studio, and included in this categorical statement were the famous 'Disciples at Emmaüs', 'The Washing of the Feet' or 'Jesus in the House of Martha and Mary', bought by the Rijksmuseum for 1,250,000 florins, 'The Head of Christ', purchased for 400,000 florins, 'The Last Supper' (a painting, incidentally, nearly as moving as that of the Disciples) bought privately for 1,600,000 florins, and other Vermeers and de Hooghs, for which museums and private collectors had paid immense sums to acquire. The court was incredulous, the art world shocked, scandalised, and sceptical.

Accordingly, the Criminal Investigation Bureau of the Dutch Police, co-operating with the police of neighbouring nations, especially the Sûreté Nationale, France, set out to get evidence of the truth behind van Meegeren's assertions. Taking charge of the investigation, Inspector W. C. J. Wooning interviewed art collectors, dealers and other intermediaries, with whom van Meegeren had done business, and who could give perhaps a clue to his psychological outlook, and tell what they knew of his own work as a painter. The inspector's inquiries brought him to Nice where, as van Meegeren claimed, he had painted between 1937 and 1939 the more spectacular of his fraudulent 'Old Masters'. In the studio there and storerooms attached to it, the Dutch police discovered several accessories, notably a 'Vermeer' pot, six goblets, and two pieces of pewter plate, all identified later as articles painted into van Meegeren's spurious pictures. There were also a number of unfinished paintings in Vermeer style, a collection of paints, true to the seventeenth-century quality of pigments, some of the significant crackle-making resin, and part of a picture frame, sawn off, so van Meegeren said, from the framed canvas

he had used for the 'Disciples at Emmaüs'. The original being too large, he had shortened it, and if the edges of that painting's canvas were examined, proof would be found of this operation.

As a test of his claims and, in particular, of his declared ability to paint without models, the Dutch authorities persuaded him to give a practical demonstration of his skills. So, the extraordinary situation arose, whereby a self-confessed falsifier was handed painting materials and canvas, and set to work to incriminate himself or establish his own guilt (in his case, it would be to demonstrate his own feelings of superiority as a painter of genius) under conditions of close confinement. Van Meegeren took for his subject 'Jesus among the Doctors', and while the picture so created under observation (he was photographed frequently while at work on it) lacks the artistic beauty, cohesion and certainly the depth of some of the paintings he claimed as his own, there was talent enough in it, a sufficient sense of Vermeer's style, the authorities agreed, to suggest that after all this man's incredible claims might be true.

To sift those claims by thorough examination of the alleged counterfeits became the task of a Commission of Art and Laboratory Experts. Upon their evidence, proceedings against the artist would depend. Originally the Commission's members were three; Dr. P. B. Coremans, Director of the Central Laboratory of Belgium Museums, Dr. W. Froentjes, Head of the Legal and Scientific Research Laboratory at the Dutch Ministry of Justice, and Dr. A. Martin de Wild, a noted art expert of The Hague. Because of the international significance of its investigations, two additional experts joined the Commission: Dr. H. J. Plenderleith, Head of the British Museum's Research Laboratory, London; and Dr. I. G. Rawlings, of the National Gallery, London.

These authorities were given eight paintings to examine, all paintings van Meegeren claimed as his own.

- (1) The Disciples at Emmaüs, signed I. Vermeer.
- (2) The Woman Taken in Adultery, signed I. Vermeer.
- (3) The Blessing of Isaac, signed I. Vermeer.
- (4) The Last Supper, signed I. Vermeer.
- (5) The Washing of the Feet, signed I. Vermeer.
- (6) Head of Christ, signed I. Vermeer.
- (7) Indoor Scene with a Woman Standing, signed P.d.H. 1658.
- (8) Indoor Scene with Card Players, signed P.d.H. 1658.



'A Boy Smoking', attributed to Franz Hals until exposed as counterfeit



'Head of Christ', Vermeer style, but proved by analysis to be of modern origin

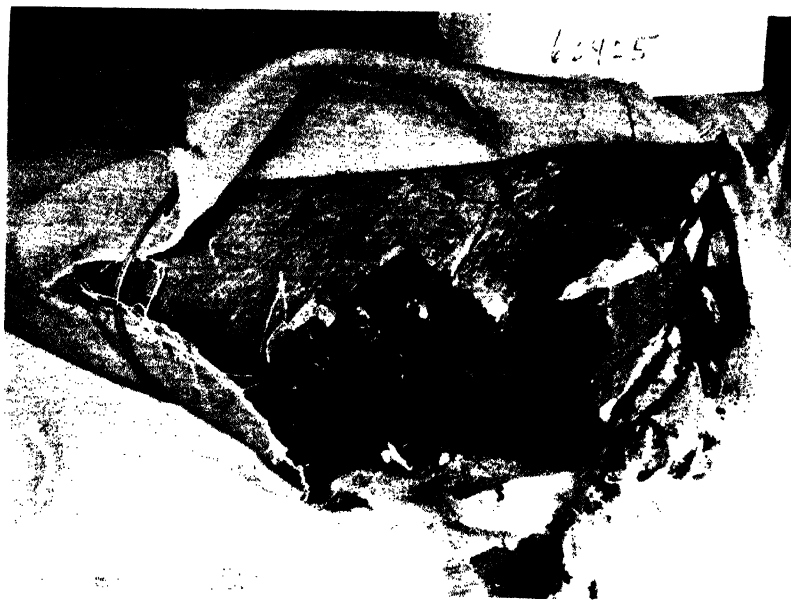


Photos by courtesy Dutch Ministry of Justice

'Jesus among the Doctors' painted as a test picture in Vermeer style by H. van Meegeren under supervision of the Dutch authorities



Inside a Turkish opium factory: the raw material brought in by farmers is ground and mixed, afterwards pouring out through the sieves as processed opium



Photos by courtesy United Nations

Contraband that failed to spread its poison: this package of Malayan cropped opium was intercepted on arrival in Japan and traced back to Singapore from where it was shipped with a consignment of medical supplies

The Commission was permitted to use any help van Meegeren might volunteer, but its task was to decide whether these pictures had been painted during the lifetime of Vermeer and Pieter de Hoogh, or, if they had been painted in recent years, was it possible for van Meegeren to be the painter.

'Our investigations,' said Dr. Froentjes, 'demanded the highest caution. For not knowing, at the outset, whether the paintings were genuine or not, we had to exercise scrupulous care to avoid any surface damage when applying our tests, particularly the chemical tests to analyse the varied pigments used. Not a corner could be disturbed, or one iota of irreparable damage caused.'

So, treated as if they were masterpieces, well nigh priceless in value, each painting was submitted to a searching threefold examination, by X-rays, by microscope, with the aid of ultra violet and infra red lighting, and by chemical analysis of its pigments and binding mediums. To the layman, the most interesting discovery and one which strongly influenced the Commission's conclusions, was the appearance in all paintings of distinctive layers of crackle. As the X-rays showed, there was the old crackle, retained by the original paint that survived on the seventeenth-century canvases, and the crackle in the surface of the new painting super-imposed on it. And whereas the hidden crackle was natural, the present top surface crackle owed its being to a synthetic resin, an artificial product of the twentieth century.

Everyone appreciated that the picture of 'The Disciples at Emmaüs' surpassed all others in excellence. This, van Meegeren explained, arose from his conception of it as his supreme answer to his critics. He meant it to symbolise his vengeance and, with this thought, burning in his mind, threw himself with passionate intensity into its creation. As he shut himself away in his studio at Roquebrune, no-one was allowed to interrupt him or to overlook him. For six to seven months, he worked on it with a single-mindedness of purpose, a fixity of concentration, that flamed within him, and if false motives fuelled his powers, they touched off qualities in him very closely akin to genius. Here, he broke his rule of no models; an Italian workman, engaged in the neighbourhood, 'stood in' for the Christ, but van Meegeren never knew the man's name, and he has not been found. When he had completed this painting, his spirit ebbed. He was tired out, emptied

of resources, but still not emptied of his anger or craving for vengeance. If a man creates a great painting, you might think that its very loveliness would, in time, glow in his mind, and rid his heart of bitterness, or any kind of savage contention. Yet this man, it seemed, lived with a singular hatred as his companion, a companion that perhaps killed him in the end.

'I intended on my death', he told Dr. P. Coremans, 'to leave a full confession of what I had done, and with it proofs by which the world would recognise this painting as my work exclusively.' He agreed that after his 'masterpiece', created in 1937, his other pictures were inferior. But, he had no regret about that. 'The Disciples at Emmaüs' won all the plaudits he craved, and so foolish were art critics, he thought, that they soon got accustomed to accepting as authentic the counterfeits he dashed off much more readily and almost entirely as money spinners.

As one of his proofs in that never published testament of fraud, he planned to reveal the subject matter of the picture originally carried by the seventeenth-century canvas he selected and amputated for 'The Disciples'. It was a study of the Raising of Lazarus.

Before the Commission X-rayed the painting, he drew a sketch of this composition. And, though part of the painting had been obscured by his soda washing methods, what the X-rays disclosed, above all the head of a woman in approximately the position he had sketched her, confirmed his drawing. Unless he had himself seen the canvas with that painting on it, how did he know it was there—the invisible background to his Vermeer?

He gave details, true not so concise, of other original subjects blotted out from his seventeenth-century canvases. In his paintings of 'The Washing of the Feet', and 'The Woman Taken in Adultery', the X-rays isolated background scenes of battlefields bustling with horses and mounted figures. More clearly, in 'The Last Supper', the X-ray plates isolated quite a vivid representation of a dog sniffing a dead bird. Such discoveries tallied, on the whole, with van Meegeren's memories.

Incidentally, when the inquiry began, he was generally frank with all the experts who visited him and questioned him on his problems, technique and accomplishments. He revelled, too, in their discoveries as it became increasingly clear to them that the paintings were not seventeenth-century originals. But later on,

realising that he faced prosecution as an art forger, he was not so happy about revealing the full range of his technical 'tricks'. He became evasive, moody and non-committal. On the charge of collaboration, he felt he had a good case to answer. For he could say that since Goering had acquired a fake, and sent two classical pictures to the Netherlands, valued at 2 million florins, in exchange for it, his so-called collaboration brought enrichment, and certainly no impoverishment, to his country's art heritage.

The Commission, after the most exacting researches ever concentrated on a set of paintings, arrived at its conclusions unanimously. The pictures, its members said, could not have been the works of seventeenth-century artists; they were of modern origin; and van Meegeren could have painted them. So, at the end of nearly two years of investigation of his claims, van Meegeren, on October 12th, 1947, faced charges of infringing artistic copyright and purposefully selling counterfeited productions under Sections 326A and 326 of the Netherlands Criminal Code. The Court—there was no jury—declared him guilty, and sentenced him to one year's imprisonment. Under the Code, the law is empowered to confiscate any article so complained of, if they were found in the guilty person's possession. But, the paintings submitted for examination were his no longer. So, their ownership was unaffected by the trial's outcome. Their value was!

Because of his medical condition—he was acutely psychopathic—van Meegeren was at once confined in a hospital and there on December 30, within three months of his conviction, he died of heart failure. So passed a controversial, baffling figure to the end, the most consummate art forger of any period, and a hoaxer unrivalled in the fabulous wealth of his profits. Whoever before produced with his own hands (I assume van Meegeren's claims were true and the laboratory experts right) a series of paintings, the total sales of which earned him close on 5,900,000 florins, nearly £600,000? Such a return is artistic vengeance celebrated in capitals of sweetest gold.

Moreover, since it appeared van Meegeren's implacable wish to chasten the critics, the experts in know-how, and men, who reverence the old, keeping their judgements of contemporary works in suspense, he could not have succeeded more dramatically or decisively. His drama did not expire with his exit from it. It

still kicks vigorously. Although, in short, a decade will soon close on his death, his 'craft' stretches forth beyond his grave, posing the question and provoking eminent authorities to argue it—were or were not his claims genuine?

In comparison with this 'master', the international art fakers, of whom the International Criminal Police Commission ordinarily gets notice, are small fry indeed.

Once earlier in his career as a laboratory specialist at the Dutch Ministry of Justice, Dr. Froentjes helped to expose a fraudulent painting. The suspect was attributed to Franz Hals, named 'A Boy Smoking' and had been bequeathed to the museum at Groningen. X-ray and solvent tests uncovered no flaws, but micro-chemical analysis of its paints proved it could not have been a seventeenth-century work. The faker had used a special gelatine glue to harden his paints and by this ruse gained a media which was proof against superficial solvent tests, but not against some of the more penetrative devices now used in laboratories to unmask the art trickster.

If it were feasible, and not looked on as an encouragement to counterfeiters, a permanent art gallery could be set up, somewhere in Europe, to display faked paintings and faked works of art. Many of its exhibits would be enthralling, their history perhaps more so!

Generally, as criminal conspiracies reveal, an unscrupulous dealer is the chief villain in any art-faking conspiracy. The artist, if malevolent in instincts, is altogether too slipshod and clueless, as a business man, to organise fraudulent sales. That demands finesse, psychological insight, boldness and a power of bargaining. On the other hand, the dealer, discovering a painter ready to prostitute his skills, pays him to copy specific paintings so reproducing exactly the artist's style, colouring matter, and his signature or accepted recognition marks. The dealer then dresses up the picture, so that it looks both venerable and venerated, before selling it to someone whose art sense is not a fraction so sharp as his acquisitive one. However, in such 'deals', the painter often gets hardly more than a pittance. Not so a van Meegeren.

One satisfaction this extraordinary faker never arrogated to himself is surely this. If the Vermeers, de Hooghs and other discredited 'Old Masters' ascribed to him are ever exhibited in a

Gallery of Frauds, they must deservedly stand at the head of it. And since art calls for effort, marshalling powers, the exercise of creative strength and honesty in the handling of its raw materials, his unquiet ghost should derive more pleasure from that achievement than if, as an international criminal, van Meegeren had merely supplied the No. 1 Exhibit, grisliness being the *leitmotif* here, in some C.I.D.'s 'Black Museum'.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

AN INTERNATIONAL MURDERER

IF it is too late for Mr. Somerset Maugham to attempt the feat then some gifted criminologist should write a study, preferably an analytical one, of the world's ten outstanding murderers—those men and women whose dreadful examples of vanity and vainglory have left in their respective countries the heaviest blots on humanity. There would be an opportunity to measure their biographical worth or worthlessness against Browning's moving lines:

‘God be thanked, the meanest of his creatures
Boasts two soul-sides, one to face the world with,
One to show a woman when he loves her.’

We are aware of what heights the angel in man can scale. We should know, no less, the depths plumbed by the devil in him, depths explored frequently for most trivial reasons.

In that gallery Britain unfortunately would be represented by two such complex, not to say monstrous characters as Haigh and Christie. I say unfortunately because the sadistic tendencies characteristic of these two killers, also of a number of child murderers, is responsible for a feeling abroad that the sadistic crime is as much a British speciality as the *crime passionnel* is a French one. France's representatives, too, in this gallery of human infamy will scarcely do her honour, for they must include the Bluebeard of Gambais, Landru, and Dr. Felix Petiot, the multi murderer of the Rue Lesueur in Nazi-occupied Paris. These four men all killed on their home soil. But a fifth, and surely the most abominable murderer turned out by Germany in non-political colours, elected to do his killings on the soil of France.

The affair of Eugene Weidmann will, short of the Apocalypse, ever retain a prominent place in French judicial history. This handsome, able minded, gentle mannered German murdered not through any motives of sadism, or in submission to any kink noticeably common to the Anglo Saxon temperament. And he certainly did not murder because of an emotional furore, such as jealousy, or an ultra strong sense of possessiveness, might provoke. He murdered for gain alone, doing so, with an incredibly cold-blooded sense of premeditation.

Since a Second World War, with its crop of ineradicable evils, has passed by since he was guillotined for his crimes, some explanation may be asked as to why he should be included in a study of international crime within our contemporary world. For this, I offer a double explanation. Weidmann furnishes us with a classic example of a murderer on the international plane. Born at Frankfurt-am-Main on February 5th, 1908, and well brought up in Germany by his highly respectable and industrious parents, he conducted his foul work while himself an unauthorised resident in France—his passport having expired, during the summer and autumn of 1937. In that period of four and a half months, his victims included a young American cabaret dancer, a young German kaufmann, a 30-year-old mother of German extraction, and three French citizens, a chauffeur, publicity agent and estate agent respectively. That list of victims if unimpressive beside Landru's ten women or Petiot's twenty-four proven 'mutilations' should keep his name well in the forefront of international murderers.

But what is of more significance, apart from the interest associated with the unravelling of a series of startling killings and disappearances, lies in the fact that the person largely responsible for discovering and identifying this criminal was Interpol's present Secretary General, Monsieur Marcel Sicot. In 1937, Monsieur Sicot headed the Sûreté Department of Seine et Oise, on whose terrain the first 'bullet through the back of the neck' murders occurred. For this reason, it became a point of honour for his department to get to the bottom of these frightening crimes. Success, after many red herrings had been eliminated, threw into relief his own administrative skills, earning him the public's gratitude for bringing to justice a man from whose evil Parisians went in dread.

To M. Sicot, personally, I am indebted for his recollections of this extraordinary case, a case whose conclusive ending is attributable not to any unusual triumph of scientific detection, but to the tenacity, unerring in its devotion to the task in hand, and shrewd grasp of human psychology shown by the investigating police.

Though no-one guessed it at the time, the earliest intimation of Weidmann's murderous activities in the Paris of the International Exhibition year was the mysterious disappearance of the young American cabaret dancer, Jean de Koven. Travelling to Europe in the spring of that year with her aunt, Mrs. Ida Sackheim, as her chaperone, she reacted with gaiety of spirit, typical of the quick mettled mercurial curiosity of her race, to Paris's grand spectacles, and to the Paris which wears its heart of ageless loveliness, undimmed by peeling façades or deserted, sadly dilapidated squares, but mirrored in golden half-light, imperishable surely once caught, about the waters of the Seine.

On July 21st, Miss de Koven failed to return to her hotel. Her aunt, at first, harboured no thought of tragedy, for although the girl vanished without leaving a message, Mrs. Sackheim knew her to be high spirited, impetuous, and of an independent nature, but well able, she was convinced, to take care of herself. But when the hours of her absence grew into a day or so, this lady's anxiety became filled with forebodings. She knew only, and the police knew no more, that the girl had gone out with an English speaking male acquaintance, whom she met sometimes in the Paris bars. The aunt did not know him, nor did anyone else identify him. But, as far as the aunt knew, Miss de Koven was not infatuated with him, nor he with her.

Naturally, the French police tried very hard to find some clue to her whereabouts. The disappearance of an American cabaret dancer in Paris is obviously a subject for headlines in the world's press. And, it tugs at the prestige of any police force when the citizens of another nation, distinguished or merely ordinary, vanish into thin air while enjoying the privileges of hospitality accorded to visiting foreigners. A tourist minded nation, too, has a particular dislike of such notoriety.

The American Embassy, like the Police received a great variety of outside suggestions, purporting to explain the girl's disappearance, but though all were investigated, even the most frivolous,

not a single trail, so initiated, led to any useful discovery. Under the impression that the Police were not as active as they might be, Miss de Koven's brother himself visited Paris and in the role of amateur detective did his utmost to reconstruct his sister's last known movements. His efforts likewise proved abysmally barren. By the time, moreover, of his return to the United States, the de Koven family's unhappiness was acute. All felt something terrible had happened. Fears were aggravated because, since her disappearance, a number of her traveller's cheques had been returned, after their encashment in France, to the Bank of issue. Examination of these cheques, in each case, showed a forged signature.

Yet, despite vigorous researches, never for one day abandoned, no light was cast on her whereabouts until the murderer Weidmann was himself arrested, and determined to make a clean breast of his abominable acts, described his enticement and killing of her. He had, he said, invited her to his home in the Saint Cloud district, merely for a cup of tea and a cigarette when suddenly, as she was sitting beside him, his money complex gained the upper hand of him. Desperate for cash, he seized a cloth, rammed it into her mouth, and as she tried to struggle, strangled her with his bare hands. He took all the cash and credit notes she had with her. But, so contemptuous was he of the rest of her possessions, no less than her own person, that he buried her fully clothed, her hat pulled over her eyes, her hands still gloved, under the paving stone of his house's front doorstep. He threw her camera, from which excellent pictures were subsequently developed, and hand-bag on top of her. And, there, beneath the threshold, the police, acting on his information, dug up her remains four and a half months later.

His net gain, through this monstrous treachery, was 800 French francs and 48 ten-dollar notes in traveller's cheques. These, he cashed, by forged signatures, and the help of a woman accomplice, approximately Miss de Koven's height, and of a slight resemblance to her in build.

It was Weidmann's misfortune, as a man, to attract women with ease. Himself handsome and strongly built, he had a young and confident smile, supported by a quick intelligence. Yet there is no proof that he was, as many men with such facile powers of

allure, sexually unbalanced. He had merely a contempt of human life when he measured its worth, if he ever thought of that, against his own interests. Had he kept to straight and narrow tracks, or observed the decencies of normal behaviour, he could have carved out a rewarding career. He had linguistic gifts, a convincing personality and a pleasing, indeed, dignified presence. He spoke English fluently, as a result of his life for a time in Canada, and although his French was moderate to imperfect when the Sûreté arrested him, by the time he was brought before the guillotine some 18 months later, his familiarity with the French tongue was, Monsieur Sicot noticed, that of a well educated foreigner.

It is equally enigmatic to reconcile his brutal strain with his deep seated and genuine love of animals. Cats above all delighted him. He had most of the Irish whimsy in his attitude to a 'puss', and would no more think of stroking a sleek egotistical beauty the wrong way than of dropping it from a height to test the validity of one of its proverbial nine lives. He had, too, the German soul for music, allied to an understanding of classical compositions, nor was he any stranger to his country's literature. During his darkest moments, until the day when the executioner's assistants pinioned him by the armpits and led him forth to be the principal figure in France's last public execution, he sustained himself largely on readings and quotations from Goethe.

Yet by planned and fiendishly executed callousness, he confounded all the essential nobility stored within him, so dragging his manhood down from its place among the angels to a place beside that of the scurviest dross on earth.

The disappearance of Jean de Koven excepted, something like a common touch crept into three unsolved murders each of which, in the autumn of 1937, aroused the thickest headlines in the French press. For, as the police were not slow to observe, the victim in all three 'mystery' cases had been shot in the nape of the neck at zero range. The murderer was so thoroughly in the victim's confidence, it seemed, that the man had no warning whatever of his quietus. The weapon suddenly withdrawn by the assassin at his back, pointed at the favourite spot, fired and the corpse dumped, either practically clothless or with the pockets of its

clothing turned inside out—such was the *modus operandi* only too much in evidence.

The body of the Parisian chauffeur, Joseph Couffy, was recovered from a ditch beside the main Paris-Orleans road, between Lamotte-Beuvron and Nouan Le Fuzelier, on September 8th. The car, belonging to him, had disappeared. He was, apparently, motoring a client to the Riviera. On October 16th, the body of a young French publicity agent, Roger Leblond, was found slumped over the back seat of his car left abandoned in a quiet street in Neuilly, one of Paris's most fashionable residential quarters. Then on November 28th, the body of the estate agent, Raymond Lesobre was found lying on the cellar steps of an untenanted house in Saint Cloud, named 'Mon Plaisir'. It, too, bore the fatal neck wounds. The pockets of the dead man's clothing were turned inside out, and the caked mud bespattering his outer garments, suggested that he had probably been dragged into this underground cellar, whereupon his assailant or assailants had shot him, well aware that it was the one place in the house best suited to muffle a pistol shot.

When the police began their inquiries, the dead estate agent's clerk was able to say that on November 25th M. Lesobre had taken a prospective client on a house-viewing tour, one of the properties available for letting on the agency's books being 'Mon Plaisir'. The clerk, unfortunately, did not see the client who, after a preliminary interview at the office, had rung up at 11 o'clock on that day, arranging for M. Lesobre to meet him, in his car, outside Saint Cloud Station at 14.45 p.m. to look over this property. After he had kept that appointment, no-one whom the police questioned saw the estate agent again. His car, too, had disappeared.

The Secretary at the 'Agence du Centre', M. Lesobre's office, did, however, provide a more vital clue—a visiting card. No police officer, this side of heaven, can ever expect a murderer, short of one possessed of the most flagrant hallucinations, to leave behind him a tangible proof of his identity, especially one so tangible as a visiting card, complete with name, address and telephone number. But, even someone else's visiting card, if carried by the murderer, is hardly an accidental possession. One seldom picks up these things in the street. And, never, an un-

soiled one. If, therefore, inquiry is strong and staunch enough in perseverance, it may well discover one thousand and one persons who could legitimately have possessed such a card, and one of those persons, it is certain, is a link with the criminal.

What followed was no exception to this principle. For the visiting card, bearing the name of Arthur Schott, 10 Boulevard de Park Imperial, Nice, led, of course, the police to look up Schott at double quick speed. This man, a respectable German commercial traveller, was not in Nice when sought; he had moved to Strasbourg. There, he proved a ready informant, being annoyed by the nation wide press publicity given to the discovery of his visiting card in the office of the murderer's victim. He said that from November 4th-15th, he had resided in Paris, then moved to Nice, where a local printer had provided him with the cards. Examined as to his movements from November 25th-28th, he gave a careful account of all his comings and goings, the details of which the police at once verified. But what was of the greatest assistance, he was quite clear in his own mind about the identity of the people to whom he had given his visiting cards. He wrote down the names of every one. So, at once, the field of inquiry became electrified.

By this time, because M. Sicot's officers failed through their underground contacts to get the slightest hint as to the murderer's identity, the view was growing that a foreigner, or someone quite unknown to criminal circles, was responsible. The crimes themselves, with robbery as their motive, were clearly the work of a professional crook, if not of a professional murderer. Interest fastened very closely on the foreign names among the list of those on whom Herr Schott left his visiting cards, one of whom was Fritz Frommer, a young German refugee then living in Paris. While the police searched for this nephew, a further clue arrived from Strasbourg which sharpened their interest in him. An acquaintance of Schott's in Paris wrote to him, saying how troubled he was that Fritz, accustomed to call on him frequently, had suddenly disappeared. It now became possible to interview the proprietress of the cheap hotel where Frommer boarded. She confirmed his absence. She liked him, describing him as a quiet living, orderly minded, young German commercial traveller; he paid her regularly, and seemed to be as honest as he was nonde-

script. Then, on November 22nd, he had left his key on her hall ratchet, and not returned. She took the detective inspector into his room; there were some clothes and books of his, also his suitcases. She thought that soon or late, he would wander back as abruptly as he had vanished.

At the Prefecture of Police's headquarters, Frommer was traced in the Aliens files. As a reference, which proved partially responsible for earning him sanctuary in France, he had given the name of another uncle of his, an Alsatian named Hugo Weber. Then, on December 4th, Weber furnished the police with the kind of clue every investigator prays for, and toils like a demon to get. He said he, too, was very worried about the absence of news of his nephew, especially as Fritz being rather a weak or easily led character, had fallen under the influence of a scoundrel named Siegfried Sauerbrey, whom he first met in prison in Germany. Apparently nephew Fritz, if weak headed, had force of character enough to campaign against the Nazi power, and because of it, found himself put away to learn better as a political prisoner.

So far as M. Weber knew, Sauerbrey had changed his name to Karrer, in which name he lived in a small, but good class villa on the fringes of the forest of Saint Cloud. M. Weber expressed his deep distrust of this man. He had, he explained, formed an impression of Sauerbrey's evil power, not merely in its influence over his nephew, but he suggested that this man might have had a hand in the Saint Cloud murder of Raymond Lesobre, the discovery of whose assassination still agitated Parisians. Indeed, thousands wondered who next would receive a *coup de grace* through the neck. Business with strangers, however well recommended, was at a premium.

Monsieur Sicot with M. Weber's statements before him now knew that his Sûreté must discover Sauerbrey or Karrer without loss of time. The house, rented by him, was traced. Known as 'La Voulzie', it stood in an isolated position beside the wood in which so many Parisian lovers had wooed—La Celle Saint Cloud. Its grounds were handsomely wooded, and the two experienced detectives sent to interview the occupier, on finding the gates locked, took their first peep over the walls and noticed how thick was the litter of autumnal leaves. Leaves not dissimilar, it flashed through the mind of one, had been caked to the wheels of the

abandoned car in which Leblond's body was found. They noticed, too, the roof tops of two cars standing inside the villa's grounds, but, just as they were straining their necks to see more, a brisk-moving young man, dressed in a well tailored blue suit, approached from the corner of the roadway. He walked up to them with a self assured air and asked, in slightly foreign tones, if he could assist them.

'You are M. Karrer', said the senior detective, inwardly surprised by this development. 'We would like to talk to you about your payments of taxes.'

'Oh yes,' he said affably enough, 'perhaps you will come into the house with me where we can discuss these matters quietly.' He unlocked the gate, and led them into a pleasantly furnished room—the house was otherwise unoccupied—and asked, still in an air of deferential politeness, if he might first see their official cards. The senior detective produced his Sûreté authority. Instantly, the well attired M. Karrer's face hardened; his hand whipped into his overcoat pocket. Out came a Mauser, and he let fly with frantic fury at the two detective inspectors. Fortunately his aim was as wild as it was hasty. As they jumped on him, one of his bullets pierced an inspector's hat; a second bullet grazed his comrade's face, but the other bullets merely peppered the walls. He was young and strongly built, and armed in addition, but their lives were at stake. The mad mêlée might have been more fatal had not one inspector suddenly grabbed a hammer, lying on an adjacent table—an instrument he had earlier noticed—and with it crashed blow after blow against Karrer's head, knocking him insensible. The shots brought outside assistance, for the detectives, knowing they might have to deal with a dangerous criminal, had warned their colleagues who arrived speedily, and Karrer, still unconscious, was trussed up in a manner nullifying escape even for a Samson, unshorn and unstunned. He was driven to the Sûreté's local headquarters in Versailles. And, apart from his murderous assault on the two police officers, it was clear he was deeply implicated in the mystery murders. For of the two cars recovered from La Voulzie's garden, each incidentally with the same number plate, 7215 R.K. 5, one was identified immediately as Lesobre's Renault. Monsieur Sicot interrogated Karrer himself in German, but the statement was made in French,

and Weidmann, who knew that language fairly well, signed his declaration without any difficulty.

'I'm not Sauerbrey or Karrer, as you suppose,' said the prisoner in the blue suit, his head heavily bandaged. 'My true name is Weidmann, Eugene Weidmann, and I will tell you a story that will dumbfound you. But not to-day. You must first let me get over my headaches. Leave me till to-morrow, and I will tell all.' So the police chained him to a camp bed, and guarded him no less carefully, hoping for revelations next morning.

Meanwhile, following a thorough search at 'La Voulzie', the objects recovered suggested that the revelations, if true, would indeed be sensational. Not only was Lesobre's car identified, but there was a second Renault which, though cleverly disguised, appeared identical with the car the shot chauffeur, Couffy, used when plying for hire beside the Place d'Opera. From the house itself, police collected and took away, among other items, a Colt revolver, bundles of male and female clothing and identity documents in the names of Karrer, Dickson and Brown, each imprinted with a photograph of Karrer, but there was also a woman's passport, issued in the name of Jeannine Keller.

On December 9th, 1937, at 8 o'clock, the interrogation proper of Weidmann began. An impatient press waited outside the doors. There were occasions when the doors threatened to give way, emitting a shoal of clamorous newsmen, anxious to convey to their readers every detail in the fearful drama thus enfolded.

Weidmann reacted honestly to the Commissioner's patient questioning. He felt no tinges of regret about killing Lesobre, but only a sense of frustrated financial gain since the estate agent's pockets, when emptied, yielded no more than 5000 French francs. His only other useful acquisition from this source was a cigarette lighter. He talked freely of his upbringing in Frankfurt-am-Main, of his mother's devotion to him, his sojourn in Canada, where he served a prison sentence for theft, his imprisonment for currency offences and embezzlement in Germany, and stay in France with a passport, the authority of which had expired. He disclosed, too, the names of his associates, the most influential of whom was Roger Million whom he first met in a German prison. After settling in Paris on May 8th, he rented the furnished villa, La Voulzie, with Million. They intended to use it, so Weidmann

said, as a retreat for a campaign in kidnapping. There, they planned to conceal their victims, until substantial ransom money was paid. Another of his 'business lines' concerned a man called Jean Blanc, whose mistress was Renée Tricot, more commonly known as Colette. With this pair, Weidmann had intended to open and operate a beauty parlour, believing its returns, after a period, would be as lucrative as his abduction dealings.

Then, as beads of perspiration gathered on his forehead, he reached a phase in his confessions which even he, a dyed-in-the-wool killer, felt reluctant to disclose in non-committal tones. 'I killed her,' he said suddenly. 'It will horrify you.'

Sensing the man's unexpected mental stress, his interrogator replied, 'Perhaps you'd like to write it down. Just give us the name now, and later on, you will feel more able to talk about the circumstances.' Immediately, with a gesture of desperation, Weidmann seized the proffered pencil, and wrote, greatly to the astonishment of the police officers, 'Jean de Koven'.

'How did you do it?'

'Strangled her,' he gasped.

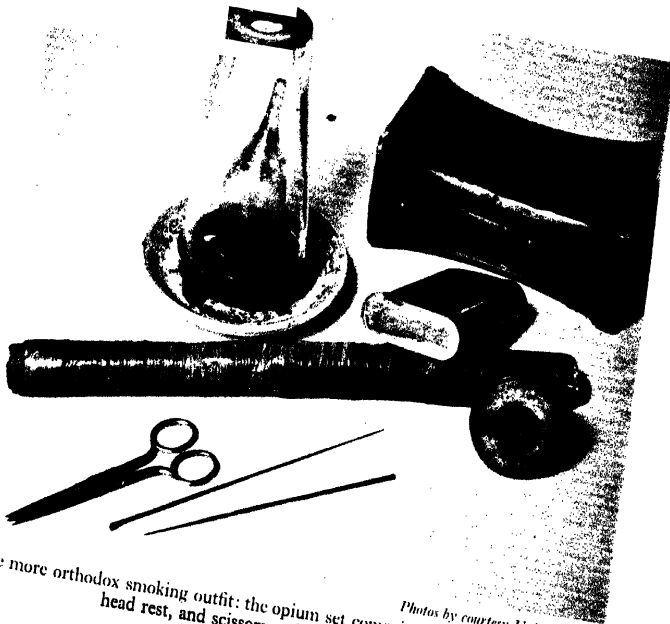
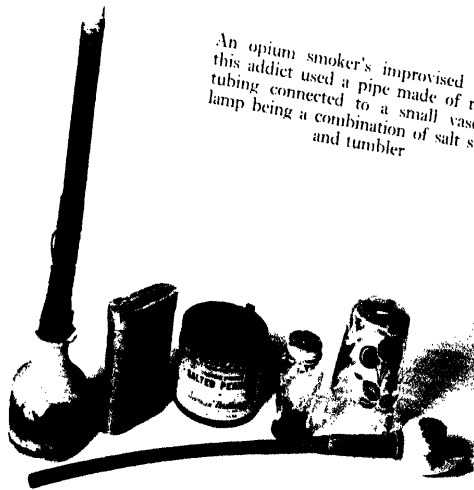
'Where is she?'

'Under the doorstep of the villa, La Voulzie. You'll find her there. But don't take me with you. I can't face it.' He cried piteously, plunging his face into his hands. But once relieved of this burden of conscience, brought about by a frail girl, the one victim he had strangled by brute force, he went on to tell how he had shot Couffy, how Leblond was disposed of, and also young Frommer, whom he had shot and buried in La Voulzie's garden.

'Why did you shoot Frommer?' said the interrogator, thinking to himself that a character, so reputedly weak and harmless, was hardly worth the shooting, or could young Frommer have gained some insight into Weidmann's crimes? 'For gain, and nothing else' was the answer.

Altogether, six murders lay behind the handsome characteristics of this man's face, though in the case of Leblond, killed with a 6.35 mm. bullet, as opposed to the 7.65 Mauser bullets used for the other nape of the neck killings, it was thought that Million fired the fatal shot. Oddly, once Weidmann made up his mind to confess, few doubted his honesty, and in the Court itself, his testi-

An opium smoker's improvised outfit:
this addict used a pipe made of rubber
tubing connected to a small vase, his
lamp being a combination of salt shaker
and tumbler



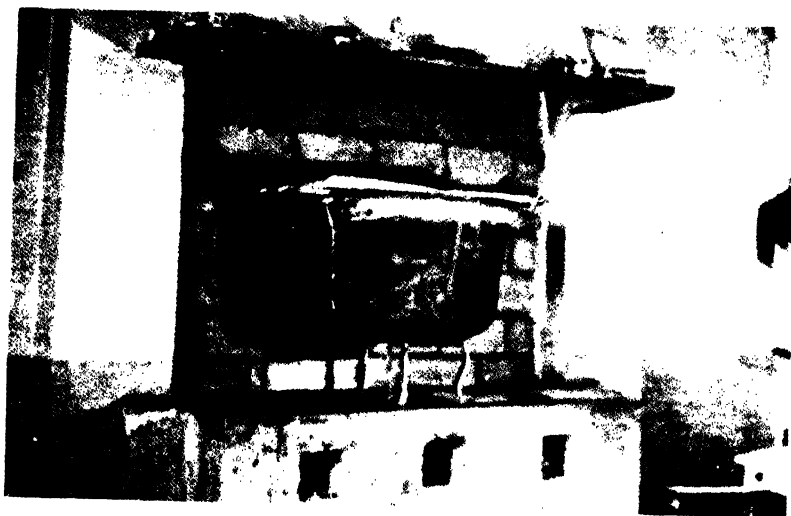
The more orthodox smoking outfit: the opium set comprises a pipe, lamp, small can,
head rest, and scissors and needles to roll the pills

Photos by courtesy United Nations



1214- Cianciulli Leonarda di Mariara

The soap-making murderess of Correggio, Northern Italy



Photos by courtesy I.C.P.C. and National Central Bureau, Italy
The kitchen range in Leonarda Cianciulli's apartment with the cauldron in which she boiled her soap-making ingredients

mony conveyed a much stronger impression of veracity than anything said by his accomplice Million.

The American girl's murder struck the world at large as the most brutal example of his innate coldbloodedness. For, while otherwise he preyed on strangers, he brought her to 'La Voulzie' as a friend, and showed her the polite attentiveness of a man with cultural aspirations, until the curse of Midas cracked in his brain. Several doctors and psychologists examined him in prison. Yet no-one discovered any trace of dementia in his make-up. He was, they believed, a perfectly normally composed individual, free of strong emotional impulses, and quite free, as M. Sicot confirms, of any leanings towards fetishism.

Just as callous, however, was the trap set for Jannine Keller, some of whose garments, with the embroidered initials 'J.K.', along with her passport, were recovered from bedroom drawers at La Voulzie. Madame Keller, née Baerst, 30 years old, of German origin, and mother of two children, came to Paris through indiscreetly replying to a newspaper advertisement, in which an Englishwoman, purporting to be resident in France, sought the services of a companion-nurse. She received back a letter, written in excellent German, which brought her to the capital on October 3rd. She was met on arrival by Weidmann and Million. It was their pleasant duty, she soon understood, to choose the applicant best fitted for the advertised post. After she had taken dinner with them, they told her, much to her gratification, that she was the fortunate candidate. Next day, as arranged, they called to collect her and her baggage, ostensibly to motor her to Vichy, and introduce her to her new employer.

Little did she guess, as this unknown destiny beckoned her, that she was travelling in the car of a man already murdered, and was about to be murdered herself. For it was in Couffy's car, adroitly disguised, that the two assassins set out with her on her ride to her fictitious employer. They stopped for lunch at Barbizon, the famed village beloved by artists, that skirts the Forest of Fontainebleau. Over the luncheon, an excellent one, even by France's divine standards, Mme Keller eagerly embraced their suggestions that they should take the opportunity of looking over the romantic cavès of the brigands.

So, under the pretext of showing this incautious, trusting woman

one of the romantic spectacles of France, Weidmann and Million escorted her to a deserted cavern and, as she gazed about her in awe, this monstrous assassin calmly pulled out his Mauser and put a bullet through the back of her neck. After rifling her pockets and handbag, they buried her on the cavern's sandy floor. And so carefully premeditated was this crime that they had a spade in the car, all ready to help with the burial task.

When confessing to this murder, Weidmann sketched for the police's benefit, the location of the cavern, where evidence of this terrible deed might be uncovered, marking also the appropriate spot of Mme Keller's committal. A digging party was brought to the site and, in common with all cases of criminal burials, the most cynical minded spectator, or participant in such scenes, cannot avoid a sense of the macabre or a feeling of being himself in stark contact with some primitive force of evil. This murder, too, with gain as its object, failed to bring the hoped for reward. Mme Keller possessed only 100 French francs in cash, and a postal order for 1,300 francs. Imagine the disappointment of these killers. It was a reasonable supposition that the mother of two children, a well dressed woman, should be better breeched, when undertaking a change of employment and also a change of residence.

Weidmann stood on trial, with his accomplices, before the Assize Court of Versailles, the very court where seventeen years earlier, Landru had faced judgement on the charge of ten 'wife murders'. The proceedings ran into twenty-one days, each day's hearing yielding, as might be expected, a full and, indeed, terrifying crop of sensations. Weidmann, charged with premeditated murder, aggravated thefts, attempted swindling and assault of two police officers with the intention to kill, was found guilty on all counts, and sentenced to be guillotined in a public place, his accomplice Million also. La Blanc received sentence of twenty months imprisonment and the woman Tricot, whom the jury accepted as an underling dominated by more masterful influences, was acquitted. The State's mercy intervened to spare Million's head, his sentence being commuted to lifelong penal servitude. So Weidmann became fated to expiate alone his abominable crimes, whether or not helped by others in their commission, with his own neck.

At 4 a.m. on June 17th, 1939, the Public Prosecutor entered his cell No. 3 at Saint Pierre Prison in Versailles. 'I have been waiting for you, Sir, since yesterday' was Weidmann's greeting. The Prosecutor explained that the Cour de Cassation (Supreme Court of Appeal) had rejected his petition for a reprieve. 'Have courage,' he said. 'I have,' was the reply. The murderer had. He asked permission to put on the blue suit, worn at the time of his arrest. He groomed his hair fastidiously in a manner reminiscent of James, Marquess of Montrose, when he, for very different reasons, faced the gallows in Edinburgh. He prayed fervently at the short mass held for him, took communion, and afterwards the traditional glass of rum. He refused, however, the traditional last cigarette.

It took only a minute or two for M. Desfourneaux, the public executioner, to remove his coat, slit his shirt, and order his assistants to pinion his arms, before leading him outside into the chill air of pre-dawn to face the guillotine. Already a vast crowd, though held far back by strong police cordons, was assembled in the background of this fatal instrument, erected on the pavement outside the prison's gates. In the weird half light, with tapers burning, the crowd's sardonic concern threatened to overwhelm the law. Some women screamed hysterically. Fights and scuffles broke out. Weidmann had to stand by, waiting for the uproar to be quelled. It was past daybreak when the glistening blade descended on him. And, through these delays, the Press obtained a full repertoire of execution pictures. Their publication provoked a public scandal and in dying thus—he died bravely enough—Weidmann ensured that his was the last head to be lopped off in public in France's penal history. Since then, such rendezvous with Madame La Guillotine have been managed quietly before select witnesses only inside prison walls.

A necromantic type of hero worship, really murder worship, fawned towards him before and after execution. Apart from their interruption of the guillotine scene, women begged for souvenirs of this infamous character. One desired, above all, the custody of his head, to save it, as she supposed, from the ignominy of being used, experimentally, by some forensic laboratory. Others craved for pieces of his clothing, his shoes, in fact for anything closely associated with him. One can only be sickened by such

ghoulish desires. Or were they the desires of people, who themselves shared what was falsely supposed to be his fetish, the collection of women's shoes?

It is a hideous sequel. When Weidmann's own vanity or *Egoismus*, as the Germans delight in describing it, blunted the edge of his sensibilities, he must have felt himself empowered to slay as he willed, imagining that his methods were foolproof, and mandate to kill approved of, wholeheartedly, by whatever gods reigned over his Valhalla.

Why, otherwise, when he saw two men, looking the very thunder and lightning of police officers, inspecting the outer walls of his house of secrets, did he approach them, and invite them to step through his front door? Then, for all his inhuman coldness and devilish powers of enticement, if he did not lose his head, he lost his aim quite lamentably, when he felt his crimes were about to be exposed. Any man, properly skilled with a Mauser, would not have failed, I think, to silence those gallant police officers. He left two cartridges undischarged. And, he blundered no less clumsily in leaving behind, at the estate agent's office, that very incriminating visiting card.

Providentially, the man who elects to murder internationally is just as subject to common failings as the pettiest sneak thief. What canker obsessed Weidmann's brain, after his good start in life, will never be known. It is senseless to talk of an evil spirit residing there, or of some maleficent racial influence predominating. The better part of him must have felt utterly confounded when in December 1937, his distraught but devoted mother wrote to him, 'If only you had followed the advice of your father and poor mother. I cannot believe you have done such a terrible thing, for you were always so gentle and good to me.'

He was gentle and good to cats, too.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE SWINDLER FROM THE GRAVE

THE swindler expects his cleverness to culminate in days of laziness and luxury. If he is original, audacious and, above all, convincing in the role he schemes to play his time of plenty may not be so brief as police officers desire. But generally, through taking his pitcher once too often to his iniquitous well, dénouement arrives. And, in the case of certainly the most reckless and paradoxically the most calculating international swindler yet encountered by Monsieur F. Franssen, Commissaire Général of Judicial Police, Brussels, and Belgium's Interpol representative, this dénouement rose from the grave itself. For, it was in a grave, ordered by himself for himself, in which he buried 'himself' that Rumanian born, Dimitri T— aspired to bring off the greatest coup of his by no means despicable experience in two Continents as an arch defrauder of life assurance companies.

Of peasant stock, he was born on August 18th, 1901. Early, he showed leanings to crime, his escapades as a teen-ager continued in early manhood, bringing him small-term prison sentences on charges of robbery and false pretences. He liked to play with false names. Then in 1927 the wider world beckoned. He emigrated to Belgium, and very soon afterwards fixed himself up with a wife, a woman from one of the Channel ports, twelve years his senior. For some reason, he did not marry her under his real name, but used an alias to bind her to him. He was not, thereby, committing bigamy. It suited him, as later events proved, to possess proofs of double identity. Possibly by this time, also, the habit of assuming false names was so ingrained in him that he felt it worth celebrating on his wedding day!

Canada, thereafter, became the homeland of this oddly assorted couple. They settled in Montreal. Dimitri got work as an electrician, and the British Commonwealth might forgivably have felt enriched by this pair of hard-working, clean-living settlers. Dimitri showed almost at once a conscientious concern for his family's well-being, the quality insurance companies love to encourage in a man, by insuring himself against risk of injury while at work. As a rule, it is the uninsured man who gets the rap. But unluckily for Dimitri, in July that year, the very mishap he feared claimed him as its victim. There was a transmission fault, a blinding flash. Dimitri recoiled, fingertips pressed to his eyelids, crying with pain. No doubt, his sight was seriously impaired. The city oculist who treated him said it was, and added that permanent blindness might be his lot. So, to his wife, Lucienne, fell the painful obligation of representing her blind husband in order to collect the 850 dollars benefit due to him, as his contract warranted, from the assurance company, *La Prevoyance*.

Was Dimitri's blindness just a trick? His firm sent him to a first-class oculist, a man with an irreproachable professional reputation who certainly would not give a certificate which attributed serious injury to a man's vision unless he had first examined and tested the patient's eyes very thoroughly indeed. The specialist would recognise, too, all the normal dodges associated with self-inflicted industrial accidents. Yet Dimitri's subsequent behaviour must cast misgivings on the authenticity of any accident in which he figured. For accidents faked with intelligence and forethought yielded, he soon discovered, if he was not aware of it already, handsome dividends for well-nigh negligible effort.

After this 'reward' his damaged eyesight soon healed. Then, tiring of Canada, he sailed back to Europe, and after a short stay in Belgium, brought his wife to live with him in Rumania. They now had a daughter. But their domesticity, as neighbours reported, was not notably blissful. So Dimitri, feeling restless again, decided to repack and reconquer the New World, but his wife, for all his cajoleries, shook her head. So, while he embarked for the United States, she stuck to her plan, staying with her family in Belgium and keeping her daughter with her.

Now Dimitri's accident-wooing plans fairly cantered into action. He first took employment in an iron-works at Youngstown,

Ohio. He had not been there long before one day a crack on the head flattened him out. No-one witnessed the blow. His workmates merely picked him up off the factory floor, with a most beautiful bump on his head. He was so obviously concussed. Thus, put out of work for several weeks, he was not put out of pocket. For again, faithful to his canny and provident instinct, he had insured himself against just such contingencies. And this time, his eyes undimmed, he was able to draw himself his full benefit money—2,000 dollars.

Not long afterwards, his ingenious brain conceived, it seemed, a more ambitious plan, designed to raise big money. Becoming friendly with a Belgian citizen, named Georges Lambert, he persuaded this man to use sometimes an alias of his, in fact the name in which he was married, while he went by his wife's maiden name. Georges played Dimitri's game quite unconcernedly, and then, as there is strong reason to suppose, he paid a terrible price for his deception.

That devilry had taken place was clear from the condition of a body discovered, lying in the underbush, off the main highway between Poland and New Middletown. The face was disfigured. There were various stab wounds. To the police, called to investigate this affair, a case of murder seldom advertised itself so blatantly. And, they had no trouble at all in discovering the victim of it, though not to this day, have they arrested the perpetrator.

From the inner pockets of the body's clothing they removed identity documents, in the name of Dimitri's alias on his marriage. There was a receipt for a life assurance premium, letters written by the victim's wife, Lucienne, in Belgium, and on one identification card, the police noted a helpful little scribble which advised the finder, in the event of any accident, to communicate with his wife at her address, there conveniently recorded, in Belgium.

After this, police investigations pointed to the accident's victim as a man tragically obsessed by impending doom. For back at Dimitri's lodgings in Scott Street, his landlady, herself much distressed over his death, told the county detectives that he was a nice quiet man with no bad habits. On the contrary, he liked, she said, to sit up late in his room, reading his Bible. But, during the last week or two, she added, he grew very uneasy. 'Something agitated his mind, and when I asked him what it was, he said he

thought someone was gunning for him.' 'I said—nonsense.' 'But, he thought different, and said that he'd had one narrow squeak, his quick wittedness only saving him from being run over and killed.'

Because of this dread, and since he professed to love deeply his wife and child, whom incidentally he told several people he wished to bring out to Youngstown, Dimitri had, the police thought, taken the not unwise step of negotiating a substantial life assurance policy on his own life, the full payment of which now became due. He actually completed his part of the contract no earlier than the Saturday before his tragic 'murder'. Then, as the assurance agent disclosed, he had asked for double the cover granted. Actually, the life office did not object to such high coverage, but before agreeing to it, they felt they needed further details of the applicant's life history. But, finally, Dimitri had contracted for the lower sum assured and paid his initial premium.

Now, no firm engaged in this necessary business of matching life's risks to man's inevitable mortality, at profit to itself, and profit to the assurer's dependants, likes meeting a full claim within a day or two of a policy's birth. Investigations, therefore, commenced. And after liaison between the U.S. police and Belgian judicial authorities, a Belgian police officer was asked to call on Dimitri's wife, Lucienne, and confront her with a photograph of the dead man. If she identified it as that of her husband, the life office's very natural disquiet, in the circumstances, would be allayed.

'Yes, that is my husband,' she told the police inspector directly he showed her the picture. 'I recognise him by his hair, his eyes and his nose. It is Dimitri . . . oh, poor, unfortunate man, always getting caught in accidents, and now this.' She covered her face, and sobbed unrestrainedly. Soon afterwards, however, she received a good sop to her sobs, namely 5,000 dollars, or their equivalent in Belgian currency—the capital sum assured, due on her husband's decease. Then, scarcely had she time to survey her riches, before the 'corpse' himself strutted in through the door, hugely pleased with himself and his scheming. Her neighbours knew of her good fortune; some congratulated her on having had so provident a husband, so, shrewdly, she now passed Dimitri off as her brother-in-law.

However, the Rumanian and his Belgian wife still had their frictions, even though, after his long absence, and some money to celebrate his homecoming, the pair's early affections should, logically, have been rekindled. True, as a precaution against his recognition and exposure in her home town, he quickly transported her and their child back, in her case for the second time, to his native land. But directly they had dispersed their latest and perhaps most ill-gotten windfall, money troubles intruded afresh. According to their Rumanian landlady's evidence, Dimitri ill-treated his wife, not hesitating to beat her because of her refusal to write to her parents in Belgium and ask them to forward money for the family's upkeep. He demanded, apparently, this charity, and was violent tempered when she opposed him.

It was then that he hatched the very boldest stroke, startlingly original, I think, in conception, indisputably so in execution, of his so far rewarding career as an international assurance swindler. It meant he had to re-appear in Belgium, also allow his wife, as she craved, to go back, with their daughter, to her parents. Then, reverting to his true name, he visited the offices of a Swiss life assurance company in Brussels, and, to the satisfaction of its doctors and actuaries, assured himself for a very substantial sum. It was, they thought, a sound risk, his life being healthy, himself prosperous in business, and no record was known of any previous dealings of his. In the event of his death, he cited his sister-in-law, Yvette K—, as his sole beneficiary. So, if some unforeseen stroke should overwhelm this man, in the full pride of his powers, she would gain no less than 50,000 Swiss francs, a pleasurable sum indeed.

Highly gratified by this acceptance of a life riddled with the gravest risks, Dimitri scuppered back alone to his homeland, with one thought fixed in his mind—the intention to die unobtrusively but conclusively (as if there were degrees of death), at the earliest favourable opportunity, and thereafter to collect and enjoy his gains. He then went about this task with, I must believe, a craftsman's relish. He determined to do the job tidily, performing all the main functions himself as if the better to enjoy the fruits of his criminal 'resurrection'.

Fate appeared as his ally. For, hardly had he arrived back in his chosen neighbourhood, before floods burst upon the district.

The heavy inundations not only caused great havoc to the peasantry, but also dislocated the administration in his native town. Then, quite suddenly, at the height of this catastrophe, and to the sorrow of a few good neighbours, Dimitri T— passed away, the victim of double pneumonia. It was then that the 'corpse's' streak of reckless impudence or brazen daring, such as few crooks own, disclosed itself. For, directly news of his 'death' circulated, Dimitri disguised himself, assumed a new name, and went to the local administrative office, where flooded confusion still predominated, and, in effect, reported his own decease. He handed the clerk a death certificate, allegedly signed by the local doctor. It stated briefly that Dimitri T—, constructional engineer and 7th Day Adventist, after being in the doctor's care from April 19th to May 26th, 1933, had died three days later, towards midnight, of double pneumonia. The clerk, thus acquainted of this solemn event, wrote out a burial order.

Already, with a student accomplice, Dimitri had arranged his own obsequies. Adventists in this corner of Europe were then buried with a minimum of formality. When, a day or two earlier, the cemetery keeper was digging a grave for some flood victim, also an adventist, Dimitri's student friend had asked him to prepare a second grave, as he had the sad task of burying there, in the same plot, a greatly lamented comrade. The keeper grunted, but co-operated.

The funeral, thus designed, was becomingly modest. At the appointed hour, Dimitri himself, disguised of course, drove an open waggon-hearse—there was no seat to it—to the cemetery, with the student as his assistant undertaker. No emblems of mourning shed a touch of beauty on the grim, morosely utilitarian scene as Dimitri, appointing himself master of ceremonies, and with the help of the student and two cemetery workers, then lowered the coffin, allegedly containing his own body, into the shallow grave, and stood by, silent and respectful, as earth was piled on top of it. Having concluded this unhappy, but essential task, he then forwarded a copy of the certificate of death to his wife in Belgium. It was hers for action and reward.

With mixed feelings, she presented it to the Swiss life assurance company's Brussels office. Her emotions teased her because, by this time, she wished, in order that her life might be less harassed,

that her husband was not merely fictitiously dead. Again, the life office asked for proofs before meeting its obligations, and handed her a medical questionnaire, for forwarding to her late husband's doctor. It asked the usual questions, as to period of illness, cause of death, history of earlier illnesses and so forth. The certificate was duly returned, with all its particulars in order, and, as further proof of authenticity, it bore the stamp of the local government's administrative office, accompanied by a legible signature.

Lucienne, in handing back this document, also produced a letter, purporting to be from her late husband's mother—his real mother had died several years previously—in which the old 'lady' wrote haltingly of her troubles over the funeral expenses. Left, as she said, without means, and now burdened by the death of a dear son, she asked for a little lump sum to clear her cruelly acquired debt, the equivalent in Rumanian money of 1,500 Swiss francs. The company, sympathetic with this very human demand, promptly met her request, and, with all formalities completed, allowed Lucienne to collect, on her sister's behalf, a cheque, less advance for funeral expenses, of 48,500 Swiss francs.

Yet now the ironic gods cackled in derision. For, if Lucienne felt suddenly opulent afresh, she faced a most teasing quandary. For, sick at heart of her quarrelsome, threatening and mischief-making husband, she had become friendly with a local doctor. And, if Dimitri was dead, as a solemn and unalterable fact, she desired nothing better than marriage with this friend. Dimitri, his health never more robust, hastened, however, to leave Rumania; to do so, on this occasion, he either stole or borrowed someone else's passport, and, as she feared, he was on her doorstep again, demanding his split of the life assurance payment. She had not even cashed the cheque, and in point of fact, the cheque was never cashed.

As usual, he wanted the money for himself. 'You can't have it all,' she said. He menaced her. Panic-stricken, she ran off to her doctor friend, and told him of her frightening anxieties and their cause. He, a sensible and honest man, went at once to the local insurance inspector and representative in the area of the firm thus defrauded.

When the inspector heard all the details the doctor was able to tell him, he then realised that the person, now unmasked in the

role of a life policy swindler, was identical with the gentleman who three years earlier had been assassinated in America. So, confronted with a twice-revived 'corpse', he at once reported all he knew to the police.

Whereupon, nearly as quickly as he had recovered from his own funeral, Dimitri was placed under arrest. The Belgian judicial authorities, after thorough interrogations of the prisoner, forwarded a précis of his statements to the United States and to Rumania. It was fully expected that the Federal authorities would prefer a murder charge against him, and request his extradition. But that was not done. The Rumanian police, for their part, set out to investigate with all care the peculiar circumstances underlying Dimitri's death from pneumonia, his burial, and reappearance, shortly afterwards, in Belgium. And, as their inquiries progressed, a pretty conspiracy came to light, implicating several people in the locality, all of whom expected a share, later on, in the 'corpse's' financial 'nest-egg'.

These discoveries prompted the police to exhume the coffin, laid in the Adventist's grave, and buried in the criminal's name. Perhaps, and they were anxious now to know the truth, some other corpse lay there, the victim of murder? But, when the coffin was opened, no human title could be given to its contents. For, if relief attended these macabre proceedings—relief because an investigation into a hoax need not be carried further—those whose duty it was to watch the opening of the newly raised coffin received a satirical jolt. The coffin, crudely made, had been buried in shallow ground, but its lid, they saw, was heavily nailed.

Then, as the carpenter prised open this covering, the ghoulis atmosphere dissolved, abruptly, into a succession of smiles. It seemed practically as if the hoaxter's mockeries had jumped out of the grave. For there, they discovered, not as some anticipated the body of a genuine flood victim or an assassinated person, but a body as bogus in its imitation of death as Dimitri himself.

The corpse, thus revealed, was in fact just a large farm sack, filled with black soil, with an extra piece of sacking as its outer covering, but, for a shroud, it was well swaddled in faded newspaper sheets. Brought for trial before a Belgian tribunal on charges of swindling and false pretences, Dimitri T— was sentenced to eight years and one month's imprisonment. Lucienne,

who testified that on several occasions he had threatened to kill her, though condemned as an accomplice, received sentence of one year and eight months' imprisonment. She, it was felt, lived very strongly under her husband's domination, and although an essential partner in his conspiracies, was not their instigator. Both criminals, too, were fined sums of 8,500 francs and 1,400 francs as restitution for their frauds.

In spite of this judgement, one is left wondering a little about the wayside victim, discovered in such suggestive circumstances in the United States, with Dimitri's identity papers so conveniently stuffed in its pockets. Beyond dispute, this arch swindler used the grave as his goldmine. But speculation alone now is judge of whether he also resorted to murder in order to exploit a 'life' which was always of optimum value to him when it was officially dead!

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

WINGS OVER CRIME

BLACK marketeers in gold, diamond thieves, drug smugglers, confidence tricksters, in fact the wealthy fraternity of the drab and glossy underworld, use the air to-day as their main highway. Through the exceptional facilities offered by passenger air lines in regular service, they fly not only to carry out their trans-continental or international coups, or to escape from the site of their felonies but, if smuggling be their forte, to deliver quickly their tiny, too easily secreted packages of illicit merchandise to the most lucrative markets. Their operational range laps the free world. Their rapidity of assault or flight is conditioned solely by the speed of the air services whose tickets they buy. Moreover, since we can now circle the globe in 100 hours, or just over four days of flying time, Interpol must mobilise its forces with mercurial celerity to intercept crooks whose wits subscribe to this highly developed sense of air mindedness.

Pursuit by official aircraft is out of the question. Discard, then, visions of world police forces, backed up by squadrons of ultra rapid pursuit planes, roaring over continents in chase of fleeing malefactors. Such visions, if imaginatively exciting, do not square with contemporary needs anyway. Justice may reign on, as a blindfolded deity, free of confusion, so long as aircraft speeds keep respectfully behind the pace of wireless beams. Thus, information radioed from one National Central Bureau to another, with the International Bureau acting sometimes as an intermediary, marshals just those hammerstrokes of arrest, hit by which many an air travelling crook must wonder whether all his strategy, his hours of clever planning and perfect,

even costly, execution of those plans were worth the candle.

Some months back, a jeweller in Bahnhofstrasse, Zurich, entertained an international diamond thief unawares, and was left with some worthless lumps of rock crystal as substitutes for his diamonds. The crook, well pleased with himself no doubt, went straight to the airport, stepped into a Sabena airliner for Brussels, and within minutes of his arrival, was airborne. By the time the Zurich police learned of the robbery, the plane had crossed the French-Belgian frontier. Seconds counted. The Brussels National Central Bureau, given his description, reacted by dispatching a jeep, loaded with detectives, to the airport. 'Too late. The aircraft was already down, the 'wanted' man on his way, with other passengers, in the service's motor coach, to the Centrum. Instantly the jeep spun about and, to the senior detective's gratification, he caught up with his quarry just as it was mounting the steps to its hotel. The criminal protested, as all do, when brutally intercepted, they feel, by a hostile fate, but his mood altered to one of taciturn reproachfulness directly the detectives whisked out from his inner pocket the package of missing diamonds intact!

Of course, it does not always pan out so neatly. International gangs, exploiting the rich intercommunications of air travel, can switch their tactics frequently with bewildering effectiveness. A feint here, a foray there, and a flight to somewhere else, place a heavy premium on their discovery and arrest. Jewels may be stolen in Madrid, deposited with a 'fence' in Copenhagen while, the same day, the party responsible celebrates in Brussels or Paris. Or, if Milan be selected for crime, the safe-breakers, their fingers still undusted, may head for Cape Town, actually flying there, before doubling back to some Central African rendezvous or, beating it in equal haste to their native country, say Argentina or Chile. Or, a gang of international card sharpers, graduates of the pre-war Viennese underworld, secure some first-rate spoils, say, in Geneva. Then, while their victims are still mustering up courage to tell the police, the gang is sitting pretty inside one of an international airways' 'Super Constellations', and eighteen hours later, all rub their eyes, and their cash primed pockets in Bombay. Most big confidence tricksters, too, as Inter-pol's experience underlines, now travel by air. Possibly this kind of travel, first class or holiday tourist, fortifies their self con-

fidence, whether their aim is to utter false cheques or swindle a sunbathing millionaire.

In sweet-aired, haste-free Switzerland, no month goes by without the international tourist traffic enticing some rascals, chiefly specialists in travellers' cheque forgeries. Several of the ilk rank as international pickpockets, schooled in the ghettos of Warsaw and Cracow. Singling out their man, a flair, this, to do it so knowingly, at the big motor rallies, ski-ing championships or at the international conventions, so dear to this watch-orderly nation, they gather in wallets and passports with the zeal of harvesters picking up sheaves. So many tourists most obligingly retain both their money and passport in one pocket.

But even if the slick-fingered crook merely grabs a wallet full of travellers' cheques, and no passport, he, the seasoned international, knows how to cash his haul easily. As a rule, he erases the owner's signature at the bottom of the cheque, inserts a false signature, and supports this with a forged passport.

Then, when asked, he countersigns his cheques, never batting an eyelid, or hardly feeling a quiver of nervousness no matter how sharply a bank cashier or some official at the local Railway Station's or Tourist Office's Bureau de Change watches him. Naturally, his fresh signature matches the one below, his face fits in with the photograph mounted inside his fraudulent passport, and he must smile at the 'foolproof simplicity' of his money-making scheme. One ingenious rogue, as skilled in penmanship as in pickpocketing tactics, uttered seventy-four stolen travellers' cheques recently at different Swiss banks before he was caught.

Others, as Herr Francis Guéron de Vionnaz, head of the Federal Government's Fingerprint and Criminal Identification Department told me, flit away to far climes as soon as their racket begins to wear thin. They may next reappear in Curacao or in Monte Video, and in one instance a trickster wanted by the Swiss police was traced through Interpol's network to a hide-out on the French Isle of St Maurice, off Madagascar.

Narcotics' traffickers, too, take advantage of air lifts. Indeed, this vile business exploits every mode of transport, from yaks to camel caravans, from tanks and armoured vehicles to dog carts, rickshaws and mule packs, and from carrier pigeons to stratosphere streaking aircraft. As an example of the way dope travels or the

diversity of travels a single packet can undergo, consider .80 kilogramme of Indian hemp seized in 1953 by the Hamburg Criminal Police. Their interference stopped it from being distributed to negro addicts mustered among U.S. garrison troops in Southern Germany. Police inquiries traced its source to Afghanistan. When first plucked from an illicit crop and smuggled out of that country, it went by Pakistan to Karachi by rail. An agent then smuggled it by boat from Karachi to Amsterdam. And, for its last lap, the drug was flown from Amsterdam to Hamburg. That seizure, serious enough in character, scarcely merits mention beside the success in November 1953 of U.S. Narcotics Law Enforcement Officers in capturing two suspected air smugglers on their return to the States after a 'commercial tour' of the Far East. From their kit, the authorities nosed out 418 lb. of opium, grown in the Yunnan province of China. One or two consignments on that scale, if successfully smuggled into a country, must establish very quickly new empires of dope addicts.

What, however, is growing in seriousness every day (let no-one shout 'wolf' once too often on these international crime themes) is the illicit traffic in gold. Gold as the commodity most desired by common people this side of heaven, is now sought and craved for more widely, yes, even more desperately and savagely, than in the age of the Aztec temple plunderers, in the time of Solomon, or even during the mad, gold tooth extracting régime of Hitler. Black markets exist for it in nearly all countries, but pre-eminently in those countries liable to or fearful of currency fluctuations. Instability here, the veriest whispers of it, set smugglers' eyes a-glitter.

Even the French, whose intelligence as individuals surpasses that of most peoples, are to-day a great nation of gold hoarders. Gold to the value of millions of pounds sterling, it is said, lies salted underground, not only in the gardens or courtyards of the peasants who, as a species, never did trust banks, but, also, under the paving stones and beneath the very floorboards of city dwellings, houses, whose owners openly declare their distrust of Banking institutions and paper money of all denominations.

Britain, also, is troubled by traffickers in illegal gold. Ask Scotland Yard. Criminal receivers in London and the bigger provincial cities pay from £9 to £10 an ounce for all stolen gold

handed in by their clients. That may seem handsome reward for a lone wolf burglar, or even for a small gang of country house or Society jewel thieves, but, when the receiver smuggles his gold to the Continent's black bourses, he can sell it for £40 to £50 an ounce, so registering five times their profit at a fractional risk. Again, the air may prove a magic carpet for his plots.

Early in 1954 Customs Officers intercepted a twenty-four-year-old girl smuggler at London airport. Feminine searchers on taking her in hand found that strapped to her back, beneath two heavy sweaters, she carried a leather pouch, the contents of which, emptied out, were gold coin valued at £130 and platinum valued at £1,522.

Some gold trafficking gangster had hired her to off-load this precious store in Paris. Had she not been detected, she would have flown to Paris, walked into a certain café and waited there, sipping wine or coffee, until someone gave her the gang's code sign. Then, by handing over her smuggler's pouch, she would receive in return her commission for courier services.

Few robberies successfully engineered since the war in Britain achieved the split-second timing of the £40,500 bullion haul stolen outside the K.L.M.'s air freight offices in Jockey's Fields, Holborn, in September 1954. The two cases, so neatly ambushed—the entire operation lasted seconds only—almost certainly left this country at top speed, intact, not melted down, probably by air, and by private plane rather than by commercial aircraft. While the police, therefore, still scoured London for it, the gold probably sat at the feet of the gang's foreign black marketeer and sales contact.

Smuggled gold may not always be diverted as security for hoarders. It may serve as bait for fraud. There is now, for instance, a trade in manufacturing English gold sovereigns on the Continent, a trade the legality of which has twice been challenged, but without success. These 'artificial' sovereigns bear the exact amount of gold as former Bank of England mintings. Moreover they are not, as their makers contend, designed as money, but as merchandise, for sale as souvenirs, jewellery decorations, bracelet ornaments and so forth. Therein lies the risk, and for some, an ironic rub. For an ostensibly gold brooch, lavish in ornamentation,

with a gold sovereign as its centrepiece, may otherwise bear no relation to real gold at all, except in price.

Similarly tourists can buy what they suppose are genuine gold bracelets, but before being tempted, I advise them to get an expert to look at the coins, dangling so merrily from each circlet, and greatly enhancing of course the bracelet's cost. Those coins may be mercenary specimens, each a well counterfeited 'gold' piece. How exasperating for a lovely woman, herself a starlet in the fashion world, if she yet betrays her taste by adorning one of her wrists with evidence of some gold trafficker's wiles.

Gold smugglers, like dope fiends, are tireless in conjuring up new tricks for hiding their wares in transit. Six kilogrammes of gold, and 860 kilogrammes of platinum were smuggled out of Australia a few months ago, but detected, owing to the vigilance of the Italian Customs authorities, in a consignment of dried calf skins!

Yet, in spite of the Western world's varied dabbings in black market gold, it is the East which acts as the gold trafficker's chief magnet. India is one of his richest dumping grounds. Here, according to reliable estimates, French settlements imported twenty-five times more gold than they actually needed in 1951 and 1953, while Portuguese settlements contented themselves with eight times as much. During the three years, 1951-53, as an Indian delegate reported at Interpol's 22nd Annual Assembly, his country's police and custom's authorities seized 11,000 kilogrammes of illicit gold. That is a huge haul. Yet, it is dwarfed by the 10 tons of 'black market gold' racketeers are now said to be smuggling yearly into India at colossal profits.

Air traffic helps to feed the gold-plated crocodile or whatever beast dominates the illicit market. At one Indian airport, passengers may be scrutinised now by a 'gold eye'. Designed on the lines of the U.S. 'Inspectoscope', the so called 'third eye' for Custom's authorities, this innovation merely rings a bell when gold is detected. And once at least, it occasioned a scene of much embarrassment in the examination sheds.

Three Hindu women, resplendent in their billowy saris, said, when it was their turn for questioning, that they carried neither gold nor jewellery of any description about their persons. Yet a few moments later when stood within the eye's focus all three

caused the detector bell to ring vigorously. 'We have no gold,' they repeated, in a chorus of indignation. Women officers then ordered a disrobing and although the search was done with professional strictness, not a grain, or so much as a glint of one, was discovered. Yet the eye could not lie. Applied to their silks alone it recorded nothing. But switched onto their bodies, an emergency X-ray plant bared instantly the secrets they felt so secure. Having swallowed a considerable quantity of gold nuggets each was, as the radiologist saw, nursing a very precious, if unusually weighty meal, in her tummy.

Gold producing nations, fearful of the scale of modern black marketing in their ore, must contemplate with dismay also the craze for gold perceptible now in China, Korea, Thailand and Burma. In these countries, thousands of farmers no sooner harvest their cereals than they scheme to turn the cash, so earned, into solid gold. Often they pay most extortionate black market prices for it.

In Thailand, it is customary for many rice growers, immediately their crop is sold, to venture with an armed escort, made up of their own workers, to some secret jungle rendezvous. There, they barter with Chinese gold 'kings', as a rule much more heavily armed and escorted, and after a palaver, conducted with scant friendliness, the grower withdraws his retinue, grumbling but seemingly satisfied with his little bag of gold pieces. The bandit, on the other hand, gloats over a fat wad of currency notes which he can at once convert into narcotics, thereby multiplying his already staggering profits. So many of these petty 'kings' march now, or swagger is the apter expression, with gold in one pocket, heroin in the other, and, in their minds, a yearning for worldly power no matter at what cost in human depravity.

Aircraft, again, often aid the arch plotters. In Burma, one gang achieved a master coup in the air, as melodramatic as any ground ambush, and more rewarding than most. Pretending to be ordinary passengers, the gang booked seats in an aircraft, on a regular service, but known to be freighting bullion. Then, as their machine climbed into the sun, the pilot and crew suddenly found themselves menaced by revolvers poked into their backs, or brandished before their eyes, by masked passengers. 'You'll land, without any funny business and where I tell you,' barked the

bandit's leader. So, as he directed, the pilot made a forced landing on a lonely coastal stretch for the gang to disembark, bearing off with it the aircraft's precious bullion freight. 'Now you can fly, wherever you like,' said the bandit chief, shepherding pilot and crew back into their craft. Imagine the chaos if 'stand and deliver', the highwayman's cry from the coach traversed eighteenth-century heath, is now to be raised to the stratosphere.

Sometimes, even pilots may be persuaded, for a consideration, to secrete gold or drugs in their cockpits; and members of aircraft crews, no less than those of ships afloat, in rare cases accept bribes or, greedy for gain, chance their arm as free-lance traffickers.

Criminals, too, know the advantage of engaging air taxi services. Once in the air, such planes can switch their scheduled destinations to suit any villainy if the pilot's complicity is won. They may flit over national frontiers, permitting currency or dope or gold or diamonds to be landed, long before any Custom's officer or police official can intervene. Butterfly flights of that kind are much preferred by some gangs to road transport. Cars can always be stopped and searched—aircraft never, while in the air!

And, I need not enlarge on the scope for conspiracy offered by private aircraft; moth-like planes, capable of landing, in very confined areas, dumping agents here and there, parachuting down illicit goods or picking up smuggled goods at sites far from surveillance. Murderers, too, may use these lightweight craft not so readily to execute their felony, as to dump their victim's body into the sea, a mountainous ravine or into some gypsum lake.

Burglaries by helicopter may be a shape of crime to come. For reconnoitring a scene, criminals can get excellent views from a helicopter's cabin, and by repeated trips, if they use a regular service, form a most accurate picture of a country house's lay-out, getting at the same time insight into the habits of its occupants. It will be a day of fresh risks for insurance companies when these machines, so noisy at present, can land silently inside walled grounds and disgorge a boldly-led gang of thieves, whose objective is to whip off an ancestral safe or collection of old masters from the ducal art gallery.

But every modern invention, so serviceable to crime, carries boomerang power, if wisely used by the forces of law. So it is

with aircraft. While crime uses wings, the law, in some countries, keeps its wings up to survey crime.

In Egypt, following a determined drive to suppress large scale trafficking in heroin, several wily fellahs began practising a new deception. Instead of growing the forbidden narcotic plants in places where inspectors could easily penetrate, they planted patches of opium poppies bang in the middle of their legitimate cereal crops. If anyone then suggested he should walk through their fields, merely to see if the field was of one crop, they accused him at once of attempting to trample down their precious crop, so depriving them of their livelihoods. However, authority is rarely the blind idiot assumed by its bitter-tongued satirists.

And police officers, tipped off as to what they might discover, took to the air. Then, through aerial reconnaissance in the Assuit district alone, the police were able, in a single season, to spot, condemn and destroy hidden opium crops which, if not detected, must have yielded, they calculated, at least $5\frac{1}{2}$ tons of secret dope.

Through similar observations, $1\frac{1}{2}$ million square metres of opium poppies were blotted out of cultivation in Mexico in the States of Sinaloa, Durango and Chihuahua. Here, the Mexican Air Force did the 'spotting'. Co-operating with police on the ground, its pilots directed radio-linked police cars and anti-drug squads of motor cyclists to the very spots where secret opium beds flourished. Then, as cunning farmers saw to their consternation, plots, on which they relied for abundant reward, suffered a scorched earth policy. Petrol fed the flames. It was a drastic, but salutary clean-up.

Some police departments in the United States, especially those with large areas for surveillance, now run their own aircraft. So Sheriffs and law officers no longer Western fashion leap onto their saddled bronchos, but in accord with America's twentieth-century dynamism, and five per cent increase in serious crime, as disclosed by 1954's returns, they clamber into the cockpits of their aircraft, and either chase some runaway car thief, or get on the track of a fugitive making for some hilly hide-out. Four Texas Sheriffs to-day pilot their own aircraft. And, they find air survey just as valuable for locating stolen cars or missing boats, as for tracking down lost game hunters, botanists, bird watchers, excursionists

and others who, through excess of zeal, lose their bearings utterly, and might otherwise die of exposure.

Air surveillance may, in fact, counter a dastardly plot. A New York kidnapper, after seizing a judge's child, mailed a carrier pigeon to him. With it went a letter demanding payment by instalments from the judge if he wished to see his child alive again. He was ordered to attach the first payment, a 1,000 dollar bill, to a capsule under the bird's wing, and liberate it. The judge ignored the threats in the letter and asked for police assistance.

He then freed the bird, primed with a dollar bill, as instructed, but directly it sped into the sky, so two aircraft, circulating overhead, began to shadow it. Their task was not so tricky as supposed. For after a fifty mile flight, the bird suddenly zoomed down to its loft. Instantly the loft's position was radioed to the nearest police station. And, so the kidnapper, greatly to his amazement, was caught with his bird.

A Belgian blackmailer once resorted to the same tactics. His plan, related by Monsieur F. E. Louwage in his engrossing book *Criminal Police Technique and Tactics* miscarried because he, also, failed to foresee the possibility of his bird being followed. The crook, residing in a village south of Brussels, was cunning enough to take his bird to a busy terminus where, as he knew, his dispatch of it would excite little notice. He demanded, under threat of exposure, that his victim should put a 10,000 Belgian Franc billet in an aluminium container attached to the bird. The Belgian police sought military aid. Eventually, a pilot was found, who was prepared to try and shadow the bird, though he felt no great confidence in the outcome of his attempt. But happily pigeons do not dodge through trees, or alter course very appreciably, once their homing sense takes command. And, with good visibility for his task, the pilot kept just the right distance behind the bird, so as not to distract it. No falcon intervened, so spoiling at a swoop the law's careful plans and, incidentally, seizing a 10,000 franc dinner into the bargain. A fast police car set out to track the aircraft, as the aircraft tracked the bird.

The pilot had flown merely twelve miles before, to his joy and relief, he saw the bird dive downwards, cote bound. The blackmailer was watching too, but never dreamed that the aircraft

nearby had an interest in him. He thrust his hand into the cage, but had barely calmed the bird's flutterings and unfastened its treasure before the arm of the law apprehended him. Thereafter it was his turn to be caged.

International crooks are bound to use air travel even more extensively as decade by decade or even year by year its services expand. With a progressive world shrinkage in travel time, the incidence of serious felonies committed on board aircraft, while actually in flight, may rise. It is a peril which must be faced squarely, objectively, and co-operatively.

Interpol, as various delegates showed at the Commission's Rome Conference in 1954, is most anxious that procedures in the case of penal offences, committed in the air, should be standardised, the powers of the various judicial authorities affected by such acts established, and the responsibilities of aircraft captains and airport commanders clearly defined in cases where it is necessary to place passengers under close arrest. To ventilate the many complicated issues involved, the Commission has forwarded copies of its reports to the International Civil Aviation Organisation, quartered at Montreal; international agreement, especially on the competence of various interested nations to judge prisoners accused of air crimes, must be obtained.

In default of a well-oiled, fast-working legal machinery, which is well understood by police and aviation officers alike, and which springs into action as soon as a crook or suspected person is landed from an aircraft, the malefactor may escape because no-one knows to whom his arrest should be reported, or which country of those most affected, the country to which the aircraft belongs, of which the victim is a national, the country of the prisoner, or the country over whose terrain the crime was committed, is most competent to judge him. And, if set free, within 24 hours or 48 hours of his arrest, such a criminal may provoke fresh, and most wasteful search problems for Interpol.

So to sum up. While crime's wings stretch ominously far already, it becomes important for all nations, served by civil aviation to-day, to keep those wings severely clipped!

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

FUGITIVES AT SEA

ESCAPE by sea presents many criminals, romantic by nature, with an irresistible outlet. They do not design it as a last fling, but, in many cases, it has that effect. Since Dr. Crippen opened a new page in social history as the first sea-going fugitive to be caught by radio interception, his kind of runaway escapade has been duplicated a thousandfold, frequently with results as dramatic.

Criminals to-day cover up their tracks more thoroughly than even a decade back. But although some of them, the more professional 'internationals' scurry from country to country, using only land frontiers, until sufficiently far, as they think, from their scene of operations to catch a boat, they may still be followed, as if Interpol had positioned a T.V. set to keep them in its focus throughout the entire gamut of their journeys. And sometimes, such journeys make light of 15,000 miles.

One of the more sensational sea escapes, brought to a close by Interpol's intervention, originated in Switzerland shortly before the Second World War. A lawyer from East Switzerland, whom I will call Wilhelm Helmut, was well respected in his neighbourhood, not only for good works, but for sagacious counsel. Many brought him their human problems, and left him grateful for his understanding, his advice and the spirit in which he offered it. To all he seemed a man blessedly immune from what bank managers describe as 'moral hazards'. Yet, one Monday morning, agitation gripped his staff. He failed to show up at his office. And he was wanted urgently, very urgently indeed, since a client, with considerable expectations, sat waiting for him, and this

gentleman's anger soon changed from mere peevishness to floor-pacing, fist-into-palm-smacking fury. Telephone calls to Herr Helmut's home, to his intimate friends, to the hotels, tea rooms and bars he ordinarily frequented, all drew blank. No-one had seen or spoken to him since Saturday. More astonishingly, from the staff's viewpoint, a girl secretary was missing, too. She, also, had last been seen on Saturday in the lawyer's company.

Baffled by these disappearances, the chief clerk, reluctantly, reported the facts to the police. Their interest in what might have been no more than a romantic escapade was sharpened because the client, now waiting so impatiently for Herr Helmut, had recently inherited a legacy, and the lawyer had promised him cash settlement of it at 10.30 a.m. on this very morning.

The police at once applied their controls to his office. Chartered accountants, brought in as official scrutinisers, began their examination of the lawyer's books and banking accounts. Very soon, they discovered an excellent reason for his absence. The sum of 450,000 Swiss francs, all of it clients' money entrusted to his care, was missing.

The lawyer's disappearance now became a matter of public importance. At Police headquarters, in Zurich, it was felt highly improbable that a man of his intelligence, position and resources would try to hide himself, and presumably his girl friend, in Switzerland. For, so idyllic a country, even if every yodelling horn, alpenstock and cuckoo clock be accepted as Romance's accessories, offers few good hide-outs. Unmarred by slums, untroubled by huge cities, Switzerland is no homeland for fugitives, and anyone who thought of selecting a mountain chalet as a safe hiding-place would be swiftly disillusioned.

Accordingly, the lawyer's portrait parlé was transmitted to Berlin, then serving Interpol as its chief international transmitting station. Berlin put out, as requested, a search circulation. Forty-eight hours passed before there was any promising reaction. Then, as the Sûreté radio Paris reported, a person, answering to the lawyer's description, had embarked at Cherbourg on the liner, *Europa*. A young lady accompanied him. The alert port official who reported these facts regretted that he could give no further information as the *Europa* was now 'on the high seas bound for New York'.

Berlin flashed this information over to Zurich. Hurried conferences then took place between police officers and magistrates in the runaway's home town, the upshot of which was that Berlin was asked to contact the *Europa's* captain, ask him to identify the suspected passenger and, if satisfied that he was the absconding Swiss lawyer, to confront him with the grave charge of embezzlement.

The Captain, soon afterwards, radioed back for further instructions. He had, his message said, interviewed the suspect, Herr Wilhelm Helmut, a lawyer of Swiss Nationality, who was sharing a luxury cabin with a young lady, also of that country. But, when he, the Captain, had spoken of embezzlement, the lawyer hotly denied the least knowledge of it, and resented so gross an imputation against his character. At this phase the Captain, though vested with powers of arrest by international maritime law, had no grounds for using them.

So, further conferences took place, at a delectable Swiss town, beloved by tourists, as magistrates and police officers decided on their wisest course of action. An order for Herr Helmut's arrest was now signed; the text of which was forwarded, along with additional instructions, to Berlin for passing directly to the liner en route.

Meanwhile, if it is fair to imagine Herr Helmut's thoughts, as he paced his first-class cabin, he must have eyed the comforts surrounding him uneasily. He would be mean in imagination not to sense the radio network tying its invisible yet unbreakable strands about his portly shape.

Now, with the latest radio message in his hand, the Captain entered the wanted man's cabin. He brought with him a posse of senior officers, one of whom, smartly and with Germanic decorum, stepped forward and gripped Herr Helmut's arms tightly from behind. Another officer stood by the girl. The lawyer, white-faced, protested fiercely against such an indignity. Coldly, the Captain read out the arrest order, and informed him that he would be held prisoner, in the liner's cells, until the ship, on her homeward voyage, docked at Hamburg.

For the girl, this was the grimmest of cabin scenes, the cruel finale to her madcap scheme. Her trust in this man, her hopes built on his promises had given her confidence, but now her world was bitter and bottomless, because this man of character,

she thought so wealthy and influential, was, if the Captain's words had any meaning, no more than a blustering treacherous criminal. His explosive protests, 'There must be some mistake. All will be clear when I get back to Switzerland,' were barren consolation for her tears.

'Remove him to the cells' was the Captain's peremptory order. So, in a few seconds, the girl had those palatial quarters to herself as Helmut, still half choking with his denials, was locked up. For ten days, a solitary cell held him. Then, at Hamburg, two Swiss detectives led him down the gangway and escorted him back to his home town where, tried for embezzlement, he was convicted and sentenced to seven years' imprisonment. I do not know what became of the girl. Let us hope she learned her lesson and later, some honest man made a woman of her.

Most smart Alecs, at all steeped in international crime, are aware of Interpol's powers of search to-day. But two decades back, it is conceivable that well-educated and well-informed persons, like the runaway Swiss lawyer, had only the haziest inkling of its activities or, perhaps, were even ignorant of its existence. Yet, though fortified by knowledge, many rascals to-day try to dodge Interpol's 'arms' by giving themselves long sea voyages and, in some cases, exhibiting rare qualities of foxiness in their attempts to lay false trails. Few, oddly, ever try their luck as stowaways. Perhaps the very hazards such travel entails—hazards embracing cramp, silence and semi-starvation to mention a few of their discomforts—daunt all but the toughest-spirited people, and crooks, especially international swindling types, are mostly poor softies under the skin.

One fraudsman, having brought off in the West End of London a neat £12,500 swindle, showed, as he imagined, Scotland Yard a clean pair of heels by fleeing at once to the Continent. However, he evidently respected the Yard's reluctance to write him off, for, after leaving London, he doubled off via Harwich and the Hook to Denmark. There, he put in stage one of his escape plan. For, he signed a hotel register in Copenhagen under an alias, and gave as his permanent place of residence, an address in Western Germany.

Yet, even as he was consolidating his escape route, radio beams, directed by Interpol's headquarters, flashed his description over

Europe and beyond, informing all stations I.C.P.C. of his identity. The Yard knew, too, his aliases, and his false names were publicised, in police circles, along with his criminal record and true name. Soon, Interpol Denmark, called the International Bureau, reporting the wanted man's one day stay on December 16th in Copenhagen under his alias, after which, the Danish police discovered, he had departed for Sweden.

Sweden's Interpol now flung out their inquiry net. Yes, the fraudsman, sought by Scotland Yard, had crossed their frontiers. An hotel porter in Stockholm recognised him. However, pursuit of his new alias led the police to the docks, where it seemed their trail ended, or set off on a new track. For Mr. X—, the fraudsman, was now, their inquiries disclosed, a passenger on board the S.S. *Barranduna*, Australia bound, and he had paid for a ticket to Melbourne.

Clever Mr. X—. How adroitly, he must have felt he had covered up his tracks, baffling one police force after another, and anyone else who might be interested in him. As he sipped his whiskies, or puffed his cigars, he must have fancied himself a big shot 'down under', a fellow with lots of money, no special ties, and all the time in creation to do himself proud. Yet, had he guessed it, another roseate dream of the criminal mind would soon be wrecked by the click of bracelets. For, informed of his travels, the Melbourne police had ample time to prepare for his reception. Thus, inevitably, as he saw before him that land of sunshine, kangaroos and cricketers, his more immediate vision was blocked by two stalwart officers. A few gruff words, and this far-travelled fugitive offender was escorted off the ship to a place, where circumnavigation of one's own little world can be achieved many times hourly.

Arrests at sea, or on a ship in port, can be equally dramatic, if the actual malefactor is not aware of himself as a fugitive from justice, but is using the sea to further his criminal schemes. Interpol saves shipping companies a lot of bother and valued passenger space, when through its agency, a man is nabbed almost as soon as he opens his cabin door.

The police of Melbourne also gathered into their dragnet one of the most skilled international gold smugglers thrown up by the post-war criminal rush on this business. A thirty-five-year-old

native of Sydney, this man had hardly seated himself in his berth before two officers, acting on 'information received', asked him to strip and submit to their search. The boat was bound for Britain, and this smuggler revelled in sea cruises. It would be a miracle, though, he realised, if he enjoyed this one. For here he was, trapped at the outset, and too burdened with the incriminating evidence to attempt bluff, concealment, or even show fight or flight.

Forced to clasp his hands behind his neck, he was frisked. And, at once, the officers unstrapped his secret, a heavy body belt inside which he was carrying almost a gold mine in miniature. There were twelve pockets, neatly stitched into the belt. From these, the officers emptied out 10 ingots of gold and some odd lumps. That discovery called for handcuffs and his exit from the ship. His voyage on this occasion had just about spanned the gangway.

When weighed, the total quantity of gold, plugged inside the smuggler's belt, proved to be 391 ozs. 9 cwt., and valued, on the Australian bullion market, at A£6,065. On the black market, where the smuggler intended to place it, its saleable value might be five to ten times greater. And, as the assayers discovered, this entire stock of gold had been heavily refined, a fact testifying to the smuggling gang's cunning. For, by shipping pure gold, the gang knew that, if one of their agents was caught, and his load confiscated, no-one could trace it back to the mines from which it came, and so cut off their secret source of supply.

A highly experienced black market gold carrier, the Sydney man had on his own admission made long sea voyages on six previous occasions, his bodybelt preserved intact throughout. Twice he had travelled to Europe, unbelting there a total of 400 ozs of black market gold, for which he collected A£40,000, and in four trips to Colombo, he delivered a similar quantity, but at merely half the price.

Australia is a questionable paradise for fugitives. Nevertheless, several criminals from Europe, not exclusively of British blood, view it favourably, distance gilding their vision, and imagine that if once they can get there, they can soon hide themselves among a friendly, informal people.

Saul K—, sentenced *in absentia* for breach of trust at the Court of Summary Jurisdiction of the Seine (Tribunal Correctionnel)

cherished just such an illusion. He slipped off to Italy, and at Genoa conspired to beat it from Europe by boarding the *Roma*, Australia bound. He took a large quantity of luggage with him, but arranged for it, since he said it was exceptionally fragile, to be carried in the ship's hold. However, the Italian N.C.B. got news of his flight, and reported back to the International Bureau.

The ship was due at Colombo on September 5th. So, the traps were set—confirmation requested from Interpol, Italy, of Saul K—'s embarkation, and a radio message to Interpol, Ceylon, conveying full particulars of the wanted criminal, and requesting his arrest and detention. And, in spite of these precautions, Interpol followed the *Roma's* course. Criminals, being artful customers, may use an untoward occurrence as an opportunity to foil pursuit, if they suspect it, or even to commit a fresh felony.

And, though Saul K— was too set on a new life 'down under' to take advantage of it, the *Roma*, because of some navigational difficulty, stopped at Port Said. But, Interpol did not intend that he should slip away. So, it now became Interpol Egypt's turn for preventative action. And, this materialised in solid shape as armed Egyptian detectives boarded the boat, identified Saul K—, and took him into custody. Yet, although astonished, if not chagrined by his unexpected arrest, he possibly did not surrender even then his hope of scoring the final laugh against justice.

He may have thought—this is conjectural, but not, I think, extravagantly so—that, after serving his sentence in France, he could still slip off to Australia, the world of law being powerless to molest him, and there enjoy himself. The basis of this optimism reclined in the more substantial of his trunks, tucked away in the ship's hold, a trunk, he was happy to think, the Egyptian police had overlooked.

It is a pity, then, he could not have accompanied the boat to Australia. For there, at the port of discharge, the local police, forewarned by Interpol, Australia, called for all his baggage, and put each piece of it to a miss-nothing scrutiny. Their finds were sensational, a pile of valuable loot, including objets d'art, paintings, scents, silverware and miniatures he had accumulated during his thievings and swindling activities in Europe. Thus, that fugitive's hopes of recovering an ill-gotten treasure chest, as a free man in a prosperous land, perished mirage-like.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE FEMININE HAND IN CRIME

*And has not such a story from of old
Down Man's successive generations roll'd
Of such a clod of saturated Earth,
Cast by the Maker into Human Mould?*

EDWARD FITZGERALD, Omar Khayyam

IN the International Underworld, women's role is quiet and unobtrusive. There are exceptions, of course. Hot, noisy, emotional exceptions. But in the main, without over-straining some attempt at generalisation, it may be said that women lack not simply sufficient physical powers to wage crime on a grand scale, but a sufficient taste for dramatic action to hanker after this indulgence. Men excel in team-work, and team-work co-ordinated to aggressive intent is a male characteristic, seen at its legitimate best in war-time, but outcrops of it, varying in efficiency and aim, occur also in times of peace.

International gangs cannot be dangerous unless they are tightly controlled and directed by one man, or a small group of criminal personalities with mental resourcefulness and administrative skills. Secrecy being their golden calf, they must worship it and exploit it, in order to excel in mobility, in powers of surprise, and swiftness of action. For these reasons women are rarely admitted to their top secrets. As Interpol's archives reveal, the feminine element cannot be divorced from gang organisations, but its registration refers not nearly so often to women gangsters or habitual criminals in their own right, as to the accomplices and girl friends of known internationals. The criminal, invariably a peacock of a man, his vanity in some cases emulating that of a novelist of genius, must

have his women friends. And their attachment to him affords sometimes a very useful clue to his presence and identity. Such girl friends, soon or late, acquire knowledge that may be dangerous to them. As their charms pass their prime, the male criminal is soon faced with a dilemma. He can cast off his girl friend and run the risk of her going to the police, if he thinks she may out of spite turn informer; or if he feels that she knows too much, he can dispose of her. The second course is seldom adopted outside fiction, chiefly because, I think, most criminals who try to organise their lives dislike, American gangsters excepted, having blood on their hands, and sooner than kill a woman whose presence is burdensome, they prefer to woo safety by catching a boat or plane to some new country, believing that distance forestalls pursuit. It is an enchanted view, liable to collapse at any moment as swiftly as the giant's tower in a pantomime.

Some women serve as drug pedlars, distributors of counterfeit notes and, if their femininity is blatantly coercive or provocatively high heeled, they may act as decoys for blackmailers or confidence tricksters, so creating an atmosphere of opulence or unguarded abandon, through which many a gullible tourist has come a cropper. Men so gullible, seeking some easy gratification of what lies nearest to their undisciplined senses, deserve in the main what they get. Sympathy in most cases is wasted on them.

However, in one field, that of murder, women can hold their own, I discover through my studies at Interpol's headquarters, with the most ruthless, the most devilishly diabolical killers yet to blot the copybook of man. And not by use of poison alone, although it is her favourite killing agent, is the female of the species so deadly. Frau Elisabeth Kusian of Berlin, who is now serving a life sentence for double murder, killed, as so many kill, with monetary gain as her overriding incentive. Her murders may have stirred in her a sense of morbid exultation. But, for those of us without mandate to unravel the knot of human fate, they must awake a sense of profound pity.

True, this woman, a nurse by profession, outraged a uniform symbolical of humanity's good neighbourliness. True, no less, she strangled a man and a woman, using pieces of clothes line looped in premeditation, to dispatch her victims. And, what was equally wicked, she caused their deaths while each, on a separate

occasion, was a guest in her home. Yet the demon in her was one formed by the violent nature of contemporary civilisation.

A glance at her background shows why. Born in Thuringia on May 6th, 1914, she was the youngest of six children; her father worked as head dairyman on a sizeable farm. But before she ever could know him, the Kaiser's war yanked him off to the front. He was killed in France in 1915. Her own upbringing, if rough, was uneventful. Finishing her education at a State school, when fourteen, she spent the next eighteen months as a maidservant at the farmhouse whose owner had employed her father. Then, feeling a need to get out of the rut, she went into domestic service in Landsberg. There she met her future husband, Walter Kusian.

When she was twenty-one she married him in Berlin. Initially their marriage prospered. Three children were born. Her own sense of *Gemütlichkeit*, most gracious endowment of Germany's womenfolk, created a comfortable home, a home by no standards extraordinary, but also, by no standards, abnormal. As a mother she could rightly feel proud of her Teutonic contributions. Then came Hitler's strident summons to war. Mobilised in 1939, Walter Kusian did not regain his freedom as a husband until his repatriation as a prisoner of war in 1945. Meanwhile, his wife turned her abilities to new ends. She built a useful career for herself as assistant matron at a children's home at Hermsdorf. And, shortly before war ended, an heroic streak revealed itself in her character. The fighting in Berlin had begun. To all except the most fanatical, this unequal battle seemed a senseless massacre of German blood. But bravery was not at a discount. This woman, serving as a volunteer medical worker, found herself in the thick of the fray, doing, as she believed, her duty by her city's people. She was hit by a bullet in the leg. The doctor to whom she was taken gave her morphine to ease the pain. Unhappily, that merciful sedative launched her on the road to drug addiction.

Possibly to satisfy her craving for drugs, she joined the hospital staff at Wirchen, afterwards transferring her services to the Robert Koch hospital. There was no questioning her skills as a nurse. The work suited her. She did it thoroughly. Her home life, unfortunately, ran less and less smoothly. Small frictions finally merged into estrangement, and in 1947 she divorced her

husband. Such, in brief, was the upbringing of a murderess. Few would describe it as dishonourable. She had seen violence, suffered for it, and discovered a perilous salve, but she had also improved her social status conspicuously through her graduations via domestic service, marriage and motherhood to the position of a trusted nurse.

What evil possessed her? No one without experience as a captive, not as a conquering plutocrat, of Berlin's ruins and the life there engendered immediately after the Nazi capitulation, can do better than imagine the oppressive misery fostered by such mass scale destruction. The atmosphere of dereliction, intensified by Four Power rule, and the ban on movement accompanying it, were worse than shackles to a people normally gay spirited, a people with zest for life, and a certain lovable audacity in their being. Of all German cities, Berlin is, or was, the least stodgy, the most imaginative, and the most resilient. Yet, on people weak-minded or with flaws in their character, this atmosphere of decay and decimation, with the threat ever present in their gossip of some fresh totalitarian mad upheaval, played upon their beings as effectively as blow-flies upon a deserted, unprotected carcass. Evils purred upon the airs, creating ugly draughts in buildings left grotesque and silent mockeries of man's misuse of power and, great as the gaps carved in stone and brick, they were small beside the gaps torn in the human heart and conscience.

On December 3rd, 1949, Hermann Seidelmann, a forty-six-year-old commercial traveller from Plaue Saxe in the East Zone, being in Berlin on business, saw Frau Kusian for the first time near the Tiergarten in the British Sector. She got into conversation with him, or maybe he took the initial step. The spot, anyway, served as an open black market, where, among many kinds of exchange, East marks could be bartered for West marks and *vice versa*. So, for strangers here to converse betokened only a common predicament, with commercial satisfactions as its deepest desire. Seidelmann was pleased enough to hand over 150 of his East marks in exchange for some West marks she had in her purse. Then, as she told him, she would like to buy more East marks off him, but had no further money in West currency with her. Perhaps, if he did not think it amiss, he would like to call at her flat that evening when, in peace and quiet, over a cup of coffee, they

could conclude their deal? He agreed readily to her plan. The appointment was fixed for eight o'clock.

The commercial traveller did not keep the nurse waiting. Punctuality, even in this war-flattened city, still counted as an ancient courtesy, one a man must pay to a woman, whatever his circumstances or hers. She was ready for him. For although she occupied a single room only, in a partially blitzed residential block, and her room was high sited, she opened the outside door to him, not the caretaker, and escorted him to her apartment. It was a well-furnished room, warm and homely, with subdued lights and ample cushions. Seidelmann gradually warmed to its atmosphere. After more than an hour's chatter, he took off his coat, and glanced at some magazines while she prepared coffee for the two of them. While doing so, she turned on the wireless, flooding the room quite suddenly with loud, rich music. The greater the volume, the more overwhelmingly her spirit reacted to it, she explained. Seidelmann did not mind. He felt physically at ease, expansive in mood, and not a bit like a man engaged on a strictly commercial mission.

Yet, stealthily, as the music approached crescendo, she opened a drawer behind him, drew out a piece of linen line, already noosed, and, with her hospitable feelings transcended by homicidal fanaticism, slipped the noose over his head and pulled it taut with fiendish strength. This murderously premeditated assault did not go exactly to plan. For, unbalanced by the savagery of her assault, Seidelmann toppled backwards off his chair. He actually fell on top of her. But, since she had dosed herself with drugs earlier in the evening, she remained clear-headed and physically stimulated. Hard as he struggled, she clung with irrevocable power to her hold, until a minute or so later he lost consciousness.

Her medical training told her exactly at what moment to relax.

Thereafter, she proceeded to strip off her victim's clothing and dismember his body, a task she performed with anatomical knowledge. To dispose of the corpse she conceived the quite sensible plan of dumping it, portion by portion, among debris-ridden corners in Berlin's East and West sectors. She even borrowed a suitcase off a friend to assist her with this grisly task. When she returned it, the lining on the inside was badly blood-stained. She apologised for the mess, and explained that she had used the suit-

case once to bring home some shopping, among which was a badly packed skinned rabbit.

Frau Kusian made good use of all the money Seidelmann possessed, hid some of his clothes and deposited other garments, without risk of identification, at the hospital, where she worked. The police did not take long to discover the dismembered parts, nor to link them to one person, whom his brother identified within five days of the murder. Yet neither diligent inquiries nor painstaking laboratory examination yielded one tangible clue to Seidelmann's assassin.

The nurse must have escaped detection had she not, only three weeks later, repeated her terrible technique. On this occasion she lured to her room a woman of the same age as Seidelmann, but very differently employed—Frau Dorothea Merten. It was her ill luck to work in a typewriter shop which had on display a machine coveted by Frau Kusian. The nurse struck up an acquaintance with the older woman, invited her once or twice to her room, but seemed to have no baser intention than that of winning her confidence in order to get a typewriter on favourable terms. She did not want it for her own use but as a Christmas gift for her lover. And ultimately she was determined to possess it even at the cost of Frau Merten's life. After confiding in her that she had not money enough to pay for it, she persuaded her to accept some silverware as security. Then, on Christmas Eve, Frau Merten, as arranged, brought the silverware to her room, expecting Frau Kusian to pay the full sum due for the typewriter, and so redeem her security.

Again, so that neighbours should not be alarmed, the nurse turned on her radio loudly, and while it blared away, took the life of her guest. Again, also, she used a prepared noose, a strip of cord cut from the same clothes line, and while Frau Merten's attention was distracted, slipped it over her neck, pulled it tight, and strangled her. The saleswoman's resistance to this shock assault was far weaker than that put up by Herr Seidelmann.

Scarcely had the body fallen before Frau Kusian's lover tapped on her door. His knock cannot have been less dramatic than the porter's knocking in *Macbeth*. The nurse kept her presence of mind.

'Stay outside just a minute,' she called out, 'while I light the Christmas candles.'

She did so, pushing at the same time Frau Merten's body under the bed. A second or so later she was in her lover's arms. He stayed the night. The next morning when it was time to get up, she took, as customary, a bath, the bathroom being outside her dwelling—but before she went, she advised him with some force of conviction that he must on no account move from the bed until she came back to him.

Since it was Christmas time, with her residential block full of comers and goers, and street traffic at a standstill, she was unable immediately to get rid of her victim. She kept her windows open, so ushering cold airs into her room, but better that discomfort than complaints by neighbours about any unusual smell coming from her quarters. Three days later, having made her dissections, she began her macabre task of hiding remains here and there among the city's deserted bomb sites.

But, silence failed, on this occasion, to crown her sin. Fortunately, Frau Merten had told friends of her typewriter dealings with Frau Kusian. The friends, as soon as she was missing, informed the police of these unusual negotiations. Yet, when the police first called, the resourceful nurse met them with a plausible story. They went away, but not without a twinge or two that she had cheated them of their suspicions. So back they came to search her room. Her hard, wintry face lost poise now, for these officers did not need to turn everything upside down or examine her possessions microscopically to discover bloodstained carpets and personal garments readily identifiable as belonging both to Seidelmann and Merten. Her vile game of murder to music was ended.

Condemned for the twofold crime, Frau Kusian escaped the death penalty by days only. For, it so chanced that just before her trial the Federal German Government introduced a new penal code, the law of January 9th, 1951, under which, via paragraph 211, sub-paragraph 1, the death penalty was rescinded. So life imprisonment and with it loss of all civic rights became her lot. The doctors appointed to examine her did not think that her addiction to drugs had affected her mind, though if she was clearly conscious of her criminal responsibility, she was also, it was equally clear, subject to fits of hysteria.

We can only speculate on what burnt-out fires of anguish

stripped this nurse mother of all sensibility. To her befell the hell created by senseless slaughter through which deprived beings are chastised in terms of hellish interest at compound rates.

Hélène B—, a murderess with no patch of boldness in her character, preferred to kill by poison. For so timorous a personality, she murdered on a grand scale, not perhaps ruthlessly, but with an almost apologetic air, because of her self-chosen role in curtailing the cords of human life. Before justice overtook her she had, the authorities estimated, murdered five husbands, and two of her own children. At her trial she was further indicted with thirteen attempted murders.

This monstrous record began in 1935, when she mixed a brand of rat poison in some milk and gave it to her sickly three-year-old daughter, Hilde. The child fell ill immediately, but her symptoms, greatly to the guilty mother's advantage, suggested a paralytic stroke and not a dose of some insidious poison. The child's hair tumbled out in handfuls. She died within a week. The doctor who attended her gave her a 'clean' certificate; he had not the flimsiest inkling of foul play.

It was too easy. Jealously conserving her poison secret, Hélène B— used it to pay off her grudge against mankind. Not in the least a flirtatious woman or one likely to invite a second glance from masculine passers-by, she could best be described as a motherly, worrying sort. Yet, within her breasts there smouldered some sparks of passionate animosity. She felt aggrieved, unspeakably so, because four of her children had died at an early age, not by her contrivance. It was her mischance, she believed with perfect sincerity, to be humanity's misbegotten child, a star-cursed woman, on whom fate unloaded its burdens and kept, unrelievedly, in a state of brooding, serpentine unhappiness.

Through the simple expedient of poisoning them, she changed her husbands fast. None of them satisfied her. Her complaint against these luckless men resided in one word, lovelessness. According to her testimony, all, at different times, beat her, scorned her advances and kept her short of housekeeping money. Yet, when brought one by one to their death beds, with their bodies semi-paralysed and hair cascading out, not one guessed how grim an atonement his unwifely behaviour had earned him.

When sentenced to death, this strange woman, born in 1907,

accepted her fate stoically. This new, somehow unexpected finality appeared to lift a weight from her, perhaps the cadaverous fist of fate. She had levelled her score with mankind. Now mankind, a little on the debit side in respect of lives stolen from her and lives she had, by her own poisonous criminality written off, was about to square the account. Completely without hysteria or fear, this insignificant-looking woman faced her judge and jailors in a spirit of meek but unfaltering objectivity. Her crimes and their recital lacked all power to stir her conscience. Just as she had killed as a happy afterthought, so now, with retribution before her, she was able to relegate all such afterthoughts to some limbo of the subconscious, unassailable alike by moral promptings or the sharp-worded accusations of any human prosecutor.

If beings such as Hélène B— merit an after life, what powers of divine compassion must be extended to Leonarda di Mariane Cianciulli, the 'monster of Correggio'. This small township in the rural province of Emilia, hitherto famed as the birthplace of Antonio Allegri, the Renaissance painter, must now add a hideous notoriety to its artistic distinction. For this murderess, also a mother, with great child-raising complexes, is probably unique in social history for the manner in which she disposed of her victims. It was her nauseating technique to convert their bodies into perfumed soap, candles and chocolate, all of which products she either sold or gave away to people in her neighbourhood.

Greed for money obsessed her, but the motives which drove her to this behaviour could never be described as clear cut. Thwarted motherhood, a purblind view of herself as an instrument of vengeance, and criminal opportunity all combined to transform her from a plain-living housewife, a good mother to her surviving children, though never a woman of high virtue, into an ogress, with soap-making as a mere subsidiary to her villainy. And it may serve as a valuable commentary upon the ineptitude of loneliness, that outrageous state into which God can call only wild beasts, certainly not love-hungry human creatures, that she should select as her victims elderly women cursed by this judgement destroying affliction.

No one, she calculated, would miss them much when they disappeared. They hardly deserved to be missed. For, as solitary beings with life's sap well nigh frozen in their arteries, their living

presence warmed precious few hearts. Occupying a walled-in cranny of their own seclusion, they faced a world frigidly indifferent to their withering heartbeats.

Her first victim, seventy-three-year-old Faustina Setti, was a pure but self-effacing soul, whose ingrown virginity had distorted her personality. Yet perhaps some feeble hope of getting a husband flickered still within her dessicated self. It must have done. Otherwise the Cianciulli woman could never have traded on it and fanned her mute resignation to a single fate into one of enchanted hope. Brazen in her perfidy, this murderess, still only in her forty-third year, said she knew of a serious-minded gentleman, a friend of hers, who was lately widowed, but now needed someone with just such homely virtues as blessed Faustina to comfort his declining years. The spinster's heart beat faster. Here, she envisaged through Cianciulli's cruel encouragement, a fulfilment at last to her secret dreams—dreams involuntarily shelved years back. And, little by little, her interest was quickened, for the murderess did not hesitate to write her letters purporting to come from her friend, a mythical character, until at last Faustina Setti sold her house, dyed her grey hair blonde and was ready to leave for Pola, the distant town where, she imagined, her lover awaited her.

Her mood so scandalously bedizened, she came finally to bid farewell to Cianciulli and, at the same time, thank her with all her heart for engineering the good fortune she was about to embrace. Her visit was not unprepared for. Since early morning the Cianciulli woman had stocked her soap-making kettle with caustic soda and put it on the boil. Soap-making in this Italian district counts as a popular domestic craft, just such a craft as the Women's Institute movement might encourage anywhere in rural England, if English housewives had such a fancy. The local signoras vie with each other in their abilities to convert animal fats into wholesome, lathery, sweetly perfumed cakes. Some of the grease, too, is moulded into attractively shaped candles, the very tapers for yielding a steady flame in celebration of holy festivals.

When Faustina Setti tripped into her apartment, agog with excitement, Cianciulli effused cordiality and, absolutely deceived by it, the spinster did not demur when she was asked to write a letter or two and some postcards to her few acquaintances in Cor-

regio, telling them how gloriously happy she was with her new friend, her future husband, at Pola.

'Your time will be so fully occupied there,' hinted Cianciulli, 'that it will be much better if you write such greetings now, so that your friends, hearing nothing of you, do not get worried.'

The spinster was practically illiterate, so the murderess-to-be guided her hand, post dating the letters and cards, thereby conniving at a perfect alibi to cover her own heinous intent.

For, as Faustina's signature lay still wet upon the last card, the murderess struck. The cup of coffee she was sipping crashed to the floor as a hatchet blow, delivered from behind, splintered her skull. That was evil enough. Worse followed as, with unbelievable speed, Cianciulli butchered her victim and put the more suitable remains to boil inside her steaming twenty-five-litre soap cauldron. Supplied already with seven kilogrammes of caustic soda, it needed only fat now to serve its traditional function.

Her twenty-year-old student son, a student of Liberal Arts at the University, was proved innocent of complicity at her trial. But in this case, acting entirely on his mother's orders and without inquiring into their legitimacy, he went to Pola, almost immediately after Faustina Setti's disappearance, and posted the letters and postcards she had written under his mother's influence. Thus reassured, the few people who knew her in Correggio quickly forgot about her, and other inhabitants if they gave her a passing thought did so without regret. This atrocious crime netted a profit of about 30,000 lire—the proceeds realised on the sale of Faustina's house and the residue of her life's savings. It was an appreciable 'nest-egg', even in 1939 when Mussolini's dreams of Axis domination were already promoting inflation.

Cianciulli's next victim was a retired school teacher, fifty-five-year-old Francesca Soavi, a woman even more mouselike in disposition, but far sharper in intelligence than the septuagenarian spinster. Yet again with devilish cunning Cianciulli preyed on her fancies, reading first her fortune with cards—she practised several forms of necromancy—the upshot of which was that she promised to get her a post, with the help of a priest, at a girls' school in Piacenza. For one grimly surviving on a small pension and eking it out by taking in pupils, this prospect of renewed employment with a generous salary seemed like a foretaste of paradise. So,

duped by its promises, she gave up her home in Correggio and, before setting out for her new post, came to bid fond farewell of her benefactress. Again the same sequence of events, terminating in a second disappearance, and a new batch of soap cakes, the perfumed quality of which afforded this monstrous woman some exceptional satisfaction. The school teacher, however, was a poor 'kill'. Her total fortune enriched the murderess by merely 3,000 lire.

So, once more, Cianciulli gazed wistfully at her soap-making cauldron and within three months of her original crime enticed her third and final victim to her apartment—the widowed fifty-three-year-old music teacher and former opera singer, Virginia Cacioppo.

Her powers in persuading this woman, much more a woman of the world than her previous victims, to seek her fortunes elsewhere—in this case a post in a tobacco factory in Florence—approached the mesmeric. Undoubtedly the murderess possessed not just a liar's accomplishments, but an element of almost magical conviction in her talk, designed as much to enslave as to enchant her hearer's will. She swore Cacioppo to secrecy, because the post she had gained for her derived, she confessed, through the favours of a former lover of hers, the manager of the manufacturing plant. If the people of Correggio heard of this they would think, she cunningly suggested, that she was still running an affair with him. Cacioppo nodded understandingly, but did not hesitate, unknown to Cianciulli, to confide in others about what was being arranged for her.

So she too climbed the flights of stairs to Cianciulli's apartment, bringing with her bonds and jewellery and never reappeared alive. The murderess even hid her jewels inside a home-made cement heart, sealed the cavity and presented it to a friend, advising him never to tamper with it, or reveal it to anyone, as it was a sacred amulet. But, because Cacioppo had friends, some of whom, knowing her plans, were not reassured when later they received letters from her posted in Florence, inquiries were started, and what became first neighbours' gossip and mere private speculation drifted quickly into a full-scale police inquiry, conducted not by the local carabinieri but by the Emilia Criminal Bureau.

Suspensions turning towards the Cianciulli woman soon un-

earthed tangible proof of her monstrosities. From a nearby well the police recovered fragments of her victims. The cement heart was opened and Cacioppo's jewels found therein. The arrest of her son caused the woman, after earlier denials of all accusations, to break down and pour out full details of her iniquities.

Sentenced finally to thirty years' imprisonment, plus three years in a criminal asylum for the insane, she wrote in the long interval pending her appeal a 1,000 page volume of memoirs. By this document she presented an apologia for murder. Life, she alleged, had treated her with unwonted harshness. Married for twenty years, she suffered within that period seventeen pregnancies. Of the twelve children born to her, eight had died prematurely. She feared for the lives of the survivors, but felt she could redeem them—a black magical supposition this—by sacrificing the lives of other human beings. She blamed the world and she blamed her mother, declaring that, as the old lady lay on her death bed, she had called down on her an unutterable curse. Hence her soap-making excesses.

There is no charity in branding this woman as a monster, the equal of Landru, Christie or Haigh. One must know the depths of the gulf of human evil as well as the summits attainable by the Madonna in woman. And even here, if there is mercy in heaven, let none deny her 'of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot'.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE SCIENTIST INTERPOLATES

TEETH AS PROOFS OF IDENTITY

'Recommends that members should inform the appropriate departments and criminal police schools of the value and need for the study and teaching of forensic odontology in connection with criminal investigation and identification.' Resolution put before Interpol's Annual General Assembly at Stockholm, 1952.

NEGLECT no means—let not one scintilla of evidence be by-passed.' Such an axiom underlies much of Interpol's inspiration, an inspiration to which scientific aids contribute handsomely against the international criminal. Moreover, I.C.P.C. accepts it as a duty to arouse scientific interest in its work, and whenever help can be gained from specialists in any field of study that help is sought and welcomed. To test the validity of new conceptions in scientific police work, and to solve problems raised by forensic laboratories, the Commission can call on a College of Experts, research workers of the highest calibre noted for their contributions to scientific detection.

Moreover, at the Paris headquarters, available for all member States to draw on, there is a pool of highly specialised police information. Daily, almost, new discoveries arise of value to it. Not only do many forensic laboratories attached to C.I.D.'s, or themselves organised as units inside Ministries of Justice, engage in their own original research work, but discoveries, helpful to police science, emerge from such varied sources as University laboratories, industrial research groups, and individuals, scientists of many different callings, consulted from time to time by a C.I.D.

Well spread, the news of new developments must reach the detectives, who in carrying out their investigations are entitled to call on every assistance considered necessary to solving the crime. So, new techniques, to be considered by laboratories and by police officers in the field, keep C.I.D.'s on their toes, alert-minded and adaptable, as much as the latest deviations in criminal tactics. The law must ever be at least one jump ahead!

True, what is of technical advantage to the police can also assist wrong-doers. But fortunately the criminal scientist remains a rarity. And when he does crop up, he is but one clever man pitting his wits against international specialists in the very field in which he schemes to reap his criminal harvests.

However, most criminals soon or late, even the most educated and intelligent, bungle their jobs or leave clues behind such as a detective-zealous schoolboy would rarely overlook. But all, the expert, the inexperienced or the incorrigibly stupid, face now resources which, at laboratory level alone, differ as conspicuously from the Victorian crime-hunter's kit as the atomic pile from the pipe stem of Sherlock Holmes.

Forensic odontology, the study of teeth for identification purposes, as Professor de Castroverde of Cuba, inspirer of the Stockholm resolution, pointed out, is no new thing. Nero's formidable and infamous mother, Aggripina, used it at least once to gain a proof which, were she alive to-day, would for a certainty put her in the condemned cell. After scheming the murder of a woman she disliked, she ordered her hirelings to bring the corpse to her. Then, as they shuffled forward with their dread burden, this monster drew apart the corpse's lips, and peered intently at her teeth. She recognised instantly their dental make-up. Her rival it was indeed, not a tooth displaced. Her underlings had done well, earning whatever reward she had promised them for a neat assassination.

Of equal effectiveness, in that it put doubts to sleep, was the dental examination imposed upon Charles the Reckless after the Battle of Nancy. Killed in the fray, the dead knight could not be found. Owing to the confusion of mud and blood, several bodies were discovered any one of which might be his. Then someone remembered how, during a tournament, the Reckless had been unhorsed, a knight's lance piercing his mouth and splintering his

upper teeth. Hence, though a person was disfigured by wounds or mutilations, it was recognised long ago that his teeth, their known shape or their absence, might be a trustworthy guide to identity.

If we visualise, for a moment, numerous friends and relations, there will be many, I warrant, whom we could pick out unfailingly if, the rest of their faces being obscured, we saw only their front teeth. To do this, of course, we need a mental picture of anyone to whose identification, by this index alone, we are prepared to swear.

For forensic odontology, however, to be of value, a precise scientific recognition system, divorced from personal knowledge of individuals, must be established. Life to-day demands it. The hazards of civilisation, particularly those in the air, respect no persons. It often happens alas, that victims of air crashes, if traced at all, are physically unrecognisable; only their teeth, as the most indestructible part of their beings, escape charring. Road accidents can have the same effect. Industrial disasters, also—even lightning strokes. Such are the hazards of chance. There is another danger manifest when a murderer sets out by this foul means or that, by fire or acid, to obliterate the identity of his victim. Or because of natural decomposition, some-one may hope, perhaps a poisoner, that after a lapse of time a certain body, laid underground, will become utterly amorphous. But teeth and artificial dentures, as forensic scientists appreciate, defy alike, in a great many specific instances, time and violent action, even action caused by explosions in mid-air, or by some frightful, disintegrating catastrophe. Ordinarily, their longevity far outlasts that of fingerprints, hair, nails, or any other anatomical feature.

Fingerprints can be erased. Some criminals, generally while in gaol, by rubbing their fingers against an abrasive like concrete dust try to erase the tell-tale whorls, scrolls, loops or composites, but, however hard they rub, they tamper only with the epidermis, and in a short time a new skin, growing through, produces the incriminating pattern as before.

To side-step this irony, an occasional top-notch American gangster submits to a surgical operation. Then, with fresh skin grafted onto his finger-tips, he really feels capable of working free-handed!

But give criminals the opportunity of distorting their teeth, such as any hack dentist might engineer for them, and few will take it. Monkeying with their papillary traces scarcely affects their beauty, but to play tricks with one's incisors and molars, so long as one still has them, is an offence against personal vanity and rarely indulged. With false teeth, it is different. A clever criminal may equip himself with a number of sets, each of which changes his appearance quite remarkably, when he wishes to practise his tricks incognito.

Yet, despite these considerations, it is not criminals we wish to identify by their teeth, so much as members of the law-abiding, well-mannered, general public, any one of whom, ominous to say, may suddenly become the focus of unusual attention. It is, therefore, greatly beneficial to a Society, an additional form of security, if it exists within a nation whose dental services, backed by an accurate system of recording, are made available for all. And so, in times of need, such charts, produced by individual dentists, serve investigators, not necessarily criminal investigators, as an indispensable recognition aid—not to be equalled even by a compulsory finger-printing system.

The advantage of state subsidised dentistry, as it exists, for instance, in Britain, is that all citizens, even alien residents and their families, get full encouragement to keep their teeth in order from infancy to dotage. The nation's physical well-being is thus boosted, and, as a secondary advantage, the system proves, at times, a vital ally to Scotland Yard officers and police laboratory specialists throughout the country.

Since 1948, the Ministry of Health has provided official charts, on which dentists keep records of their patients' teeth, and photostat copies of these charts, recording treatment, are preserved at the Dental Estimates Board, Eastbourne. Officially, a dentist should keep a patient's chart for a minimum of three years after the patient ceases to attend for treatment, but as legal rulings are sometimes given on treatments seven years old, it is customary for most dentists to retain their charts for that length of time.

It may be said, too, that dentists throughout the British Isles exercise a craftsman's pride in their handiwork. Nearly all cultivate individual touches of distinction and penetration with drill, polishing tools, scraper or some other instrument in their chair-

side armaments. Most of them, too, retain a keen memory of their patients' mouths. So, it is not so difficult, as might be thought, to trace a set of teeth, even when such teeth, requiring identification, are discovered far from their natural owner's place of residence.

With so sound a basis on which to work, metropolitan, borough or county C.I.D.s in Britain—and no doubt in other countries also—must benefit from the results of recent researches, conducted both at home and in the United States, into techniques for using teeth to determine individual characteristics, i.e. a person's age, and to give guidance into his constitution, physical development, and perhaps his habits. While he remains under twenty-five, examination of his teeth will, in normal circumstances, permit the forensic dentist to calculate his age to an accuracy of plus or minus six months. With older teeth, there is a greater margin of error. But, related to other features of the recovered skeleton or body, they can still afford a useful age clue.

We may not yet have reached the time when, in special cases, Life Assurance Companies may require a person's teeth to be identified as evidence of death before they pay out on a large life assurance policy. In one case, mentioned in this book, such a safeguard would have prevented substantial frauds. But, already, through the good graces of dental detection, as practised in Britain, the crime of murder has been brought home to several individuals, when, in other circumstances, they might have escaped a proper penalty.

Of outstanding experience in this field, Dr. Keith Simpson, Reader in Forensic Medicine at Guy's Hospital, London, and head of the Hospital's Forensic Laboratory, assisted Scotland Yard in an important case of identification in July 1942. At a blitzed Baptist Chapel in Kennington Road, London, some workmen, while clearing the cellar of debris, found human remains. The grave, if describable as such, was crudely excavated, the body being hidden beneath a paving stone. Two further signs aggravated suspicion—scorch marks in the cellar, and lime strewn over the corpse.

Dr. Simpson's examination of these remains in the forensic laboratory showed them to be those of a middle-aged woman, forty-five to fifty years old, 5 ft. to 5 ft. 1 in. in height, her hair

brown in colour, but greying fast. She had suffered from a fibroid growth internally. Whoever had buried her intended that she should not be identified.

The head, arms and legs had been severed from the trunk by someone ignorant of anatomy. Apart from her missing arms and limbs, there were a few scanty tufts only left of her hair, her lower jaw was missing, but her upper jaw, fortunately for justice, was recovered intact. Dr. Simpson in his analysis noted, too, burn marks on several bones. Deposits of lime had actually preserved certain tissues. And from injuries discovered in her throat, he deduced that she had died by strangulation, probably 12-18 months earlier.

Scotland Yard's suspicions fastened at once on Harry Dobkin, a war-time fire-watcher employed at premises which adjoined the chapel. His wife, Rachel, aged forty-nine, the same age as himself, had disappeared on April 11th, 1941. She had gone out during a blitz, he told everybody, and never came back. Her disappearance relieved him of some financial trouble. For just about this time, she was pressing him, police inquiries revealed, to pay off arrears of maintenance.

But could Scotland Yard be sure that the woman concealed in the cellar was Mrs. Dobkin? True, her presumed date of death fitted in with Dr. Simpson's estimate, her age, her height, 5 ft. 1 in. and the colour of her hair also tallied with those of the body found under the chapel floor.

The likelihood of Mrs. Dobkin being the victim increased when, switching their inquiries to medical quarters, the detectives working on the case found two London hospitals where Mrs. Dobkin had attended as a patient, her complaint being a tumour in her womb. At each hospital records showed that she had been advised to undergo an operation, advice which she refused. Yet these facts, though strongly significant, needed support to be acceptable as infallible proof of identity.

The case against Dobkin then hinged upon identification of the upper jaw, belonging to the Chapel victim. Mrs. Dobkin's dentist was traced. Not only had he a clear recollection of his work in her mouth; among his private charts, Ministry of Health charts not being introduced until six years later, he produced that of Mrs. Dobkin. Meanwhile, the forensic laboratory's assistants

had examined the upper jaw in their keeping, noting with precision details such as the number and position of all remaining teeth, situation of the fillings, their composition, the marks of dental fitments against the jaw bones, and root remains from extractions. They thus completed a chart. And when Mrs. Dobkin's dentist brought along his chart for comparison, there was no real divergence.

As a further scientific test, notice of which was taken in Court, Miss Mary Newman, head of the photographic section at Guy's Hospital, superimposed a photograph of Mrs. Dobkin on the skull remains. On one previous occasion only, in the Doctor Ruxton murder case in 1936, had such a reconstruction been attempted, the technique adopted being that evolved by two Scottish professors.

Following, therefore, his remand and committal, Harry Dobkin was charged with the murder of his wife Rachel before Mr. Justice Wrottesley, at the Central Criminal Court, the Old Bailey, on November 18th, 1942. Whatever hope counsel for the defence held of refuting identification of the cellar remains collapsed in face of the dental evidence. After a five day trial, Dobkin, found guilty, was sentenced to death, and executed at Wandsworth Prison on January 27th, 1943.

The layman who attempts to destroy teeth may well gnash his own in despair. Experimenting to test the resistance of human teeth to heat, Professor Derobert of France exposed specimens to great temperatures, such temperatures as exploding aircraft generate, and it was rare, he discovered, for teeth to lose their identity. At the highest temperatures, at which he baked them in his laboratory 'crematorium', he noted a twenty per cent shrinkage. And, surprisingly, whereas healthy teeth tended to fracture, decayed teeth kept their form intact.

Fillings, too, leave unmistakable traces, though melting away at high temperatures. But the cavities they formerly occupied, when peered into microscopically, look like prehistoric caves, furnished with decipherable rock paintings. Mercury fillings, he saw, left slaty-coloured deposits, gold fillings fused into tiny, but distinguishable globes.

In fact, the Professor, if given a burnt tooth, can make a fair estimate of the temperature at which it was roasted. False teeth

can be no less tell-tale—dental plates, like those worked in vitallium or ciconium, stand up, unshattered, to extraordinary high temperatures. Dental parts in acrylic evaporate at lower temperatures.

By Providence's good design, the 'Acid Bath' killer, John George Haigh, overlooked the false teeth of his victim, a sixty-one-year-old lady, whose body he threw into a forty-five gallon tub in his builder's yard at Crawley, West Sussex, and saturated in sulphuric acid. The acid destroyed all physical traces of the victim, but it did not affect certain synthetic articles she had with her; one such survival being her dental plate, an acrylic composition. The police traced the dental mechanic who made it, the dentist, too, who fitted it into her mouth—so again, a murderer, to his cost, omitted to remove or obliterate that living or synthetic identity 'card' many people now bear in their mouths.

Through the evidence of Saxon bodies, dug up in East Anglia, teeth can lie underground for 1,500 years, and preserve, after that vast sleep, clues to the ailments borne by their long vanished owners. Modern dentistry, so skilful a nurse of these precious possessions, may endow them with even longer life, just as it, undoubtedly, endows them with recognition marks, the tokens of the twentieth century's technological processes, and different techniques in vogue in different countries, all clearly recognisable to the international expert. No-one can predict, atomic dust forebearing, how long the greatly patched-up, carefully catalogued teeth of to-day's civilised generations will survive the grave.

However, for the solving of identity puzzles, whether of criminal origin or not, it is individuals, not progress in social dentistry, which excite the forensic scientist's skills. From the relics before him, he deduces his data—data, as favourable to the innocent as it is incriminating to the guilty. It is the detective's task to relate his clues to individual responsibility, the scientist, most fittingly, in this connection, furnishes his interpolations firstly as an aid to investigations, and secondly, if necessary, as evidence at the trial of the accused. And, true, if you visualise this branch of forensic medicine, growing in importance, as the world becomes more teeth-conscious, it is still but a tiny twig in the prodigious tree of scientific research, any one leaf from which may serve suddenly to elicit a vital fact in a difficult investigation.

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